

Groton Daily Independent

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Groton Community Calendar

Monday, March 20

Senior Menu: Ranch chicken bread, boiled potatoes, broccoli, fruit cocktail, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza.

School Lunch: Taco salads.

The Pantry, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Christian Literature Circle, 7:30 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.; Newsletter deadline.

United Methodist: Lent Bible Study with Pastor Brandon, 7 p.m.

1 p.m.: Senior Citizens Meet at the Groton Community Center.

Tuesday, March 21

Middle School Talent Show, GHS Gym, 7 p.m.

Senior Menu: Scalloped potatoes with ham, peas, sunset salad, cookie, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: French toast.

School Lunch: Meatballs, mashed potatoes.

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

The Pantry, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Quilting, 9 a.m.

Cell Phone Navigation Assistance Class, 10:30 a.m. to noon and 12:30 p.m. to 2 p.m., Groton Community Center

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PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460



Wednesday, March 22

Senior Menu: Chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes with gravy, corn, peaches, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Egg omelets.

School Lunch: Chicken strips, tri taters.

Groton CM&A: Kids' Club, Youth Group and Adult Bible Study begins at 7 pm

St. John's Lutheran: Bible Study, 2:45 p.m.; Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.; Lent Service, 7 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 6 p.m.; Soup Supper, 6 p.m. (League serves), Worship, 7 p.m.

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Book Study with Lindsey Tietz, 4 p.m.; Confirmation, 4 p.m.

Thursday, March 23

Senior Menu: Spaghetti with meat sauce, mixed vegetables, garlic toast, Mandarin orange salad.

School Breakfast: Muffins.

School Lunch: Hot dogs, baked beans.

All State Band in Sioux Falls

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

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Weekly Vikings Recap

By Jack & Duane Kolsrud

It was a busy start to free agency for the Vikings this year as the team added four new players to the roster and made a few key re-signings as well. Although none of the players were considered splash signings, all indications by experts were that the signings were very smart moves by the Vikings.

The Vikings kicked off free agency by signing former Baltimore Ravens tight end, Josh Oliver. The first free agent signing came as a shock to a lot of people given the team just traded for TJ Hockenson during this past season. However, now that it has been reported that the Vikings are not planning on re-signing Irv Smith Jr, the signing of Oliver makes a lot of sense. It also makes a lot of sense given that Oliver is the number one-ranked blocking tight end in the NFL. So, although he is not a big name, he does come to the Vikings with an elite skillset.

Next, the Vikings wisely moved to the defensive side of the ball for their next three free-agent signings. The team first signed Marcus Davenport, the former New Orleans Saints edge rusher who has a ton of talent but struggled last year by getting only 0.5 sacks for the entire season.

Next, the Vikings signed the former Arizona Cardinals' cornerback, Byron Murphy. Murphy was a huge signing for the Vikings whose cornerback room has gotten super young the past couple of weeks with the departure of Patrick Peterson and Cam Dantzler.

And then the Vikings finished out their defensive "rebuild" by signing former Green Bay Packers defensive lineman, Dean Lowry. Lowry will likely fill a similar role for the Vikings as he did for the Packers, which is being an average defensive end who has the occasional big play.

The Vikings also made some key re-signings of their current free-agent players over the week. The big one was that the Vikings re-signed starting center, Garrett Bradbury. Although Bradbury has had his ups and downs over his career, his re-signing to the Vikings is big in that it ensures the Vikings will have the same starting five players on the offensive line this upcoming season. That is something this team has not been able to have coming into a season in a long time.

The other big re-signing was of running back, Alexander Mattison. Mattison who was rumored to possibly be traded last year had a great season backing up Dalvin Cook. Now with his re-signing, the question of whether the Vikings will keep Dalvin Cook has gotten even more intense.

Sadly, the Vikings also lost some of their players to other teams in free agency. Patrick Peterson left for the Pittsburgh Steelers and Dalvin Tomlinson left for the Cleveland Browns. Although their departures will surely hurt the team, losing players from a defense that played so horrendously for a lot of the season is surely not the worst thing that could happen to this Vikings team.

Looking ahead, the question of what the Vikings are going to do with Dalvin Cook and Za'Darius Smith is going to keep getting asked until a final decision is made. I believe that the Vikings will pull the plug on both players as their current talent does not outweigh their cap hit. However, if the team feels that they can keep both Cook and Smith by maneuvering the salary cap in some way, the team might just do that instead.

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What do you say?

Before my junior year in high school, I returned from a Boy Scout canoeing trip to discover my sister had been killed in a car crash. I will never forget the sadness of the moment when I walked into the house that was filled with what seemed like half the caring and wonderful town of De Smet to find my mom and dad there grieving. It was near the end of that summer, but the beginning of a long period of mourning for my family and me.



Based on Science, Built on Trust



the late Richard P. Holm, MD

There were lessons that came to me after my sister's death. I realized how important support from a community could be. Consolation came from our friends, neighbors, church community, as well as people we barely knew. It seemed more about their presence and not their words. I noticed there were people who had trouble themselves dealing with such loss, and they sort of disappeared.

Also, I realized that a funeral is not exactly a time of closure for a family, but really just the beginning of a time to accept reality and forge ahead with the difficult changes that life can and does deal out. It took me years to think about my sister and relish in her memory rather than cringe from the pain of the loss. In that sense, I know I will never have closure and that's good.

Some 14 years after her death, while I was on the faculty of a medical school in Georgia, I found myself having to advise medical students how to talk to patients or family about sad news. I reviewed the medical literature on the subject at the time and concluded that there is no right way to do it except to be 100 percent honest and to say whatever is needed with compassion.

Through the years those guidelines have sustained me while I have had the burden of sharing awful news.

Bottom line, it is being there, more than words that consoles. Never worry about what to say, just show up, be honest, and care.

Richard P. Holm, MD, passed away in March of 2020 after a battle with pancreatic cancer. He was founder of The Prairie Doc® and author of "Life's Final Season, A Guide for Aging and Dying with Grace" available on Amazon. Dr. Holm's legacy lives on through his Prairie Doc® organization. For free and easy access to the entire Prairie Doc® library, visit www.prairiedoc.org and follow Prairie Doc® on Facebook, featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show streaming on SDPB and Facebook most Thursdays at 7 p.m. Central.

We the People

The South Dakota Humanities Council is making available a weekly column -- "We the People" -- that focuses on the U.S. Constitution. It is written by David Adler, who is president of The Alturas Institute, a non-profit organization created to promote the Constitution, gender equality, and civic education.



By David Adler

Court Declares a Right to Contraceptives for Unmarried Individuals

In 1965, in the landmark case of *Griswold v. Connecticut*, the U.S. Supreme Court, for the first time in our nation's history, invoked the right to privacy for the purpose of upholding the right of married couples to access contraceptives. *Griswold* was hailed by women, who had been fighting for the right to use contraceptives for well over a century. It granted women control over their own reproductive organs and provided married couples with the liberty to decide whether to procreate, plan families and make decisions associated with parenthood.

Griswold v. Connecticut, rendered at the height of America's sexual revolution, recently prompted a curious reader of this column to ask about the establishment of the constitutional right of unmarried couples' access to contraceptives. The answer to her delightful question is to be found in the Court's landmark ruling in *Eisenstadt v. Baird* in 1972—seven years after *Griswold*.

Eisenstadt v. Baird, in a 6-1 decision written by Justice William Brennan, extended the protection of the right of privacy to unmarried individuals by overturning a Massachusetts law that permitted only physicians to prescribe means of birth control and then only to married couples.

The protagonist in this story was a young man, William Baird, who had made something of a short career out of protesting—and violating—similar state laws. In the spring of 1965, Baird violated a New York law by handing out contraceptives in a Long Island community. A few months later, he protested the Catholic Church's opposition to birth control on the steps of New York's St. Patrick's Cathedral. He was subsequently arrested in New Jersey for publicly displaying contraceptives in violation of a state law.

On April 6, 1967, Baird, by now a veteran protester, delivered a lecture in Boston about overpopulation and contraception. Following his remarks, Baird displayed various contraceptives and personally handed to a woman a jar of vaginal foam. Police officers arrested Baird and he was convicted on two counts: exhibiting contraceptives and disseminating contraceptives to an unmarried person. The high court of Massachusetts dismissed the first count on grounds that it violated Baird's First Amendment right of free speech but upheld the second conviction. Contending that the law under which he was convicted was unconstitutional, Baird appealed to federal district court, which dismissed his action. However, the federal appellate court set aside the dismissal and the sheriff of Suffolk County, Eisenstadt, appealed the decision to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Justice Brennan's opinion for the Court struck down the Massachusetts law, vindicating Baird's right to distribute contraceptives. Brennan built upon the Court's ruling in *Griswold* that upheld a married couple's right to contraceptives and declared that the Massachusetts law violated the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment. Brennan rejected the state's rationale for banning contraceptive use among the unmarried—detering premarital sex—as an unreasonable justification. The statute failed the rational basis test. The logical effect of a law prohibiting the sale or gift of contraceptives to unmarried women, he

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explained, was to "prescribe pregnancy and the birth of an unwanted child as punishment for fornication."

While the Court struck down the Massachusetts law as a violation of the Equal Protection Clause, Justice Brennan expanded the right to privacy as set forth in Griswold. "It is true," Justice Brennan wrote, "that in Griswold, the right of privacy in question inhered in the marital relationship. Yet the marital couple is not an independent entity with a mind and heart of its own, but an association of two individuals with a separate intellectual and emotional makeup. If the right to privacy means anything, it is the right of an individual, married or single, to be free from unwanted governmental intrusion into matters so fundamentally affecting a person as the decision whether to bear or beget a child."

Justice Brennan's declaration that the right to privacy is an individual right carved a path for subsequent assertions of privacy rights in various areas of the law, including the identification by the Court in Roe v. Wade of abortion rights.

Of immediate importance, of course, was the fact that the right of married couples to access contraceptives required, under the principle of equal protection, an equal right of access for unmarried individuals. There was no rational basis for distinguishing between two classes of people, married and unmarried. In subsequent years, the logic of this reasoning proved compelling in protecting other intimate activities and associations, including, for example, same-sex marriage.

The right to privacy, an unenumerated right, was described by commentators shortly after Griswold was delivered, as a "fixed star in our constitutional firmament." This star, however, might not be as "fixed" as most citizens hope it to be. The right to contraceptives, to the extent that it is grounded in the right to privacy, is under threat. No less a figure than Justice Clarence Thomas has questioned the constitutional status of unenumerated liberties, including the right to privacy.

Bates Township Equalization Meeting Notice:

The Bates Township Board of Equalization will meet at the Clerk's home on Tuesday, March 21st, 2023 at 6:30 pm.

All persons disputing their assessments are requested to notify the clerk prior to the meeting.

Betty Geist
Bates Township Clerk
14523 409th Ave
Conde, SD 57434

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Miss Rodeo South Dakota, Morgan Erickson, poses with Emery Blackwood of Groton at the North Dakota Winter Show this past weekend. Miss Erickson is from Hot Springs South Dakota. She will compete for Miss Rodeo America at the National Finals Rodeo in December. (Photo by

Bruce Babcock)

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The Bulletin

by **Newsweek**

JANUARY 24, 2023

World in Brief

China to Australia by security agencies before his arrest in October. Duggan faces extradition to the U.S. for charges related to training Chinese military pilots.

- French President Emmanuel Macron will likely face a no-confidence vote after he pushed through a pension reform without a parliament vote.
- Authorities in Ecuador and Peru continued to assess the damage after a 6.8 measuring earthquake rocked the South American nations, killing at least 15 people and injuring hundreds of others.
- Former Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou will visit China next week, the first such visit by a former leader of the island nation, to de-escalate tensions between China and Taiwan.
- In the ongoing war in Ukraine, former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev suggested that Russia could strike the International Criminal Court with a hypersonic missile in response to its decision to issue an arrest warrant for President Vladimir Putin.

- Veteran attorney Alan Dershowitz said that Donald Trump will be able to get reelected in 2024 and run the country "from prison" if he is convicted. Read more on the story below.

- North Korea said it carried out a simulated nuclear attack on South Korea with its missile launch on Sunday — its fifth demonstration this month — as the U.S. and South Korea conduct one of their largest joint military drills.

- Former U.S. Marine Corps pilot Daniel Duggan's lawyer said that the 54-year-old might have been "lured" from



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

'Why wait?' SD businesses can purchase opioid overdose medication under new law

Legislature expands access to life-saving antidote ahead of over-the-counter approval

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - MARCH 20, 2023 12:30 AM

Bystanders who witness an opioid overdose in a public space, restaurant or workplace only have one option under existing state law: call 911 and wait for help to arrive.

But waiting puts lives at risk, said Rep. Brian Mulder, R-Sioux Falls.

Under current law, medications used to treat opioid overdoses in emergency situations — such as naloxone, often delivered as Narcan nasal spray — are only able to be purchased and carried by first responders, nurses and people who know someone at risk of overdose.

That will change on July 1.

Mulder introduced and passed a bill through the South Dakota Legislature this session that will allow employers to purchase opioid antagonists and make them available for employees or members of the public to use in an emergency. The bill sailed through the House and Senate with unanimous approval, and Gov. Kristi Noem signed the bill into law on March 8.

"I saw it as a win-win for the public to access this and administer it to people in need as soon as possible," Mulder said.

Mulder originally started working on the bill with Avera Health to expand access to Narcan to assisted living facilities, where residents could overdose because of a bad reaction to a drug but don't have direct access to a nurse, said Avera Vice President of Public Policy Kim Malsam-Rysdon.

Narcan is poised to be sold over the counter, after a committee of advisers to the Food and Drug Administration last month voted in favor of making Narcan available without a prescription. However, Malsam-Rysdon didn't see the point in waiting, since it could be years until that happens.

"Why wait?" Malsam-Rysdon said.

Mulder wanted to make it more accessible. He envisions making opioid antagonists widely available, like the ubiquitous nature of defibrillators for cardiac arrests in a public space.

Opioids include prescription medications, heroin and fentanyl. Opioid-related deaths continue to grow in South Dakota and have doubled from 21 to 43 in the last decade.

"The only number I can think is appropriate in that statistic is zero," said Matt Stanley, psychiatrist and clinical vice president of behavioral health services at Avera.

Malsam-Rysdon and Stanley emphasized that Narcan does not have a negative effect on someone if it's administered and they aren't actually suffering from an opioid overdose. The medication also does not give people the sensation of a high — it actually kicks them right into withdrawal — and is relatively easy to administer with instructions.

"We have to do everything we can in terms of resources to control this," Stanley said. "These are lives that shouldn't be lost."

Mulder envisions Narcan will be beneficial in spaces such as homeless shelters, bars or restaurants that vulnerable populations frequent, or at companies such as Mulder's employer, Volunteers of America-Dakotas, which offers residential treatment programs and assessments for people with chemical dependency issues.

However, there are no plans from the state to establish an awareness campaign. Avera does not have

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any intentions to spread awareness about the bill to South Dakota employers, and the Greater Sioux Falls Chamber of Commerce also does not plan to give word to its members, said Jennie Doyen, chamber vice president of member services.

Stanley said it isn't necessary that opioid antagonists are everywhere or that every employer takes advantage of the law. He said the beauty of the bill is that it isn't a mandate, so employers decide what their employees and customers need.

Employers need a standing order from a provider before purchasing the medication. A can of Narcan nasal spray can range from \$25 to \$80.

How the medicine is stored will be up to the business. It can be stored in emergency kits or in a Narcan dispenser, which is what Avera has in its addiction care center, Stanley said. Other states have installed Narcan boxes and Narcan vending machines in public spaces.

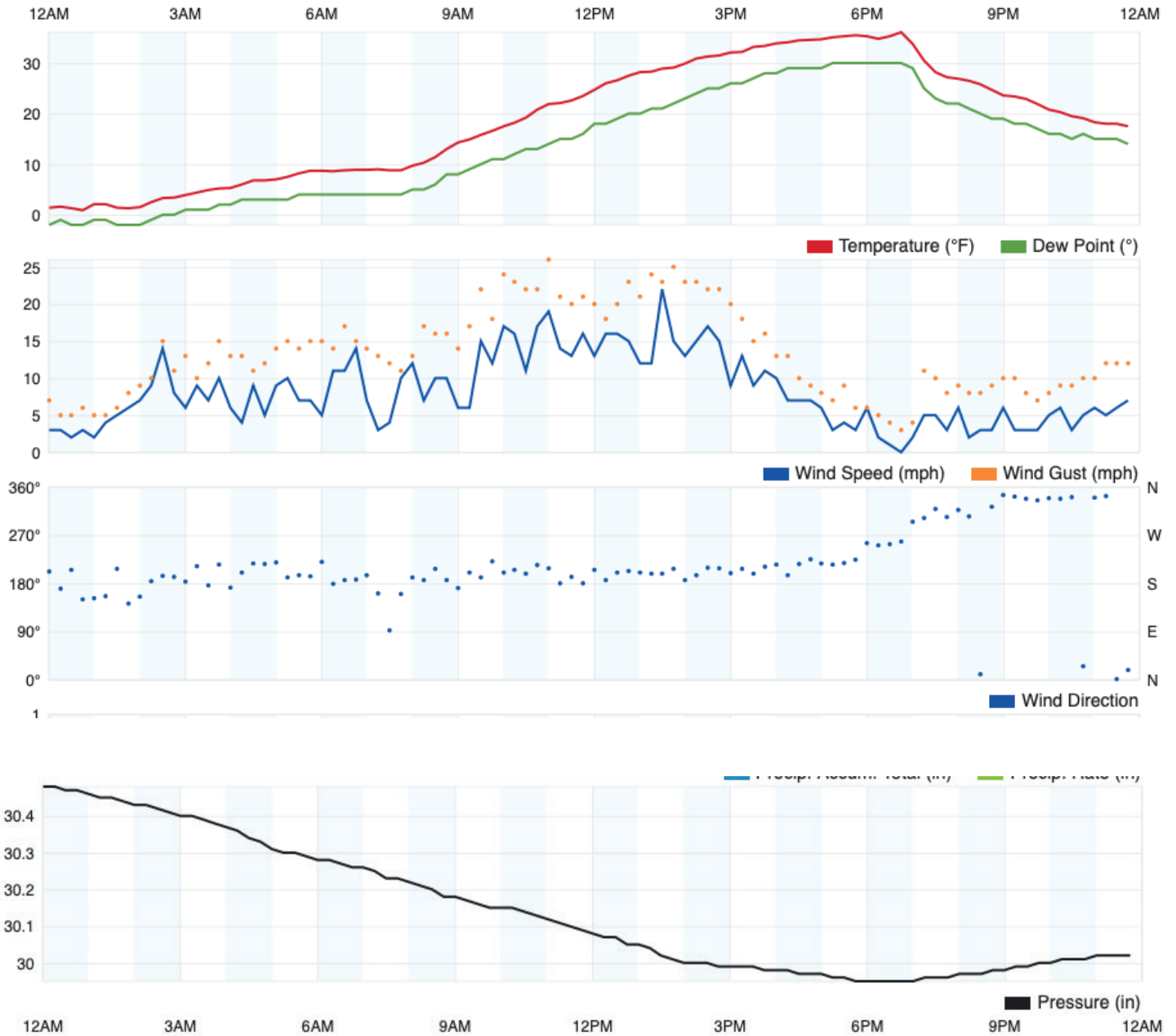
"You just have to think we're going to be even more impactful the more available this is," Malsam-Rysdon said.

Makenzie Huber is a lifelong South Dakotan whose work has won national and regional awards. She's spent five years as a journalist with experience reporting on workforce, development and business issues within the state.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday
						
Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	40% → 80%	50%	20%	40%	20%
		Chance Snow then Snow	Chance Snow	Partly Sunny then Slight Chance Snow	Chance Snow	Slight Chance Snow
High: 23 °F	Low: 14 °F	High: 29 °F	Low: 15 °F	High: 28 °F	Low: 11 °F	High: 25 °F

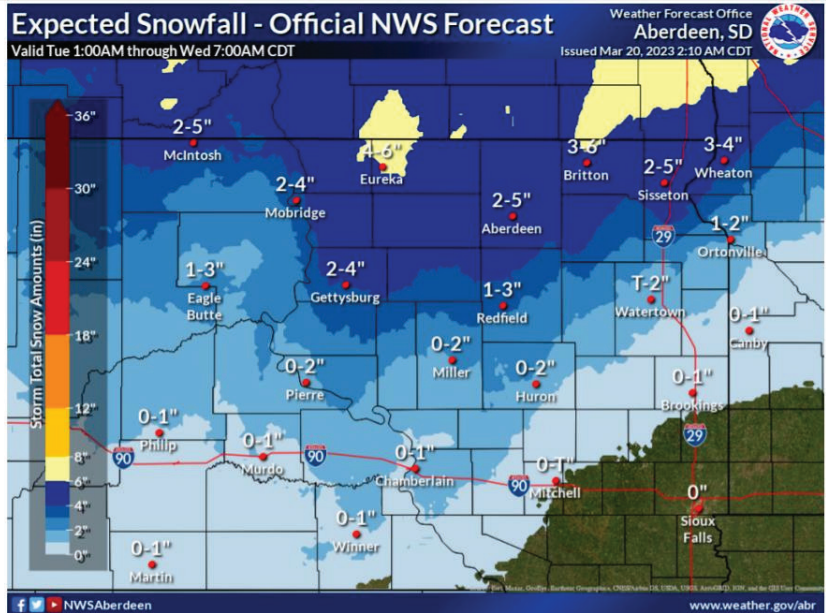


Another Round of Winter Weather

March 20, 2023
2:48 AM

Key Messages

- Relatively progressive band of snowfall
- Timing: Tuesday into early Wednesday
 - **Most snow falling Tuesday afternoon through Tuesday evening**
- **Mostly falling as snow** - Can't rule out a wintry mix or locally light freezing drizzle
- Less intense winds with this system
- Moderate confidence with respect to Timing of Precipitation & Snow Accumulation



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

We continue to watch for a system that will proceed across South Dakota on Tuesday, and western Minnesota late Tuesday into early Wednesday. This will spread accumulating snowfall across the area, though at times we cant rule out a brief period of wintry mix.

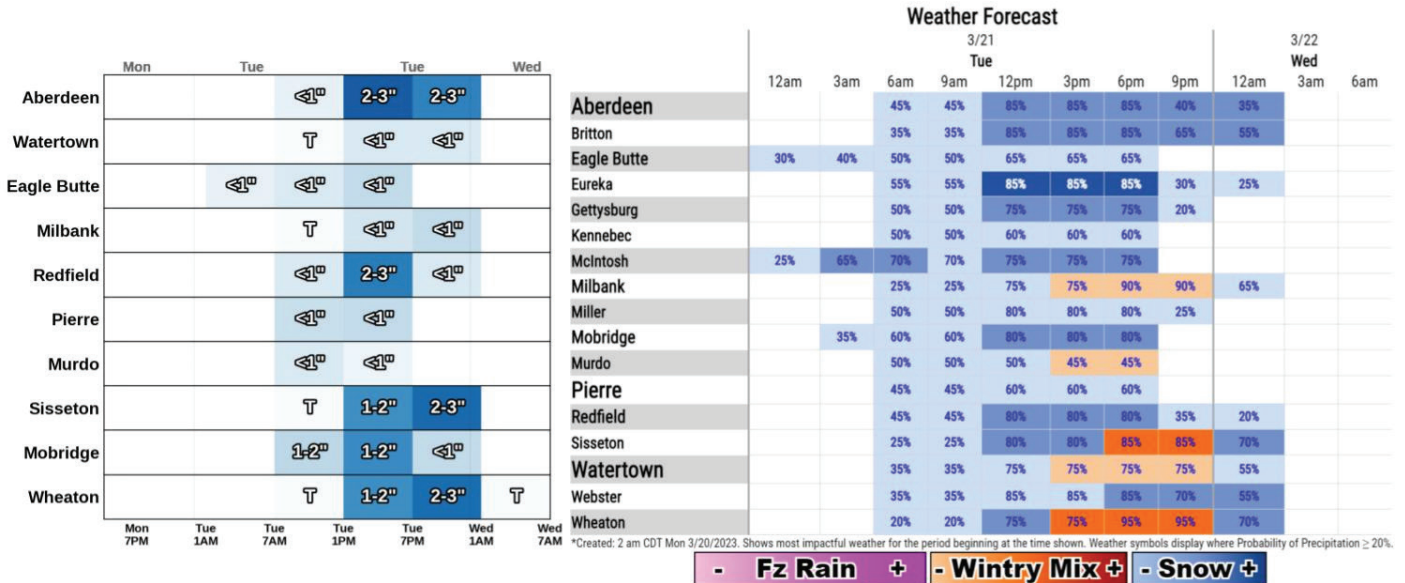
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Timing: Precipitation Type & Intensity

March 20, 2023
3:16 AM



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD



Wind Timing & Intensity

March 20, 2023
2:51 AM

Through Mid-Week

Maximum Wind Gust Forecast

	3/20 Mon						3/21 Tue						3/22 Wed					
	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am
Aberdeen	18	20	17	17	21	18	15	16	17	21	21	22	17	20	24	24	21	17
Britton	13	16	16	16	17	16	16	20	23	26	26	26	23	17	22	23	21	16
Eagle Butte	12	13	13	17	23	29	29	25	23	22	18	13	18	22	22	21	16	15
Eureka	10	13	15	20	23	26	28	26	25	26	24	23	18	17	22	22	18	14
Gettysburg	15	15	15	20	25	28	30	26	24	24	21	18	15	21	25	23	20	16
Kennebec	15	13	10	15	18	21	22	21	21	17	13	9	15	24	26	24	17	14
McIntosh	10	10	13	17	22	25	28	25	25	22	16	14	15	16	16	15	12	10
Milbank	17	15	13	14	13	13	16	18	18	20	22	22	21	16	26	29	26	22
Miller	16	14	13	15	17	18	17	17	18	20	15	13	13	23	28	26	20	16
Mobridge	10	12	13	16	21	22	23	21	21	20	17	16	15	17	17	15	13	10
Murdo	14	13	10	15	20	24	24	22	20	16	13	10	17	23	23	20	15	14
Pierre	12	10	12	15	21	23	24	21	18	17	15	12	15	21	21	18	13	12
Redfield	18	17	14	15	16	15	14	16	18	21	20	17	13	22	28	28	22	17
Sisseton	15	14	12	13	13	12	15	17	17	20	23	23	20	15	25	30	29	22
Watertown	14	17	17	20	20	22	24	26	28	29	29	28	24	22	28	28	24	18
Webster	16	18	17	18	20	24	26	29	31	33	32	32	26	20	28	28	25	21
Wheaton	14	13	12	13	12	13	16	20	20	23	25	24	24	16	18	26	26	23

*Table values in mph
**Created: 2 am CDT Mon 3/20/2023
***Values are maximums over the period beginning at the time shown.



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Timing winds around the system, thankfully doesn't appear that blowing/drifting snow will be a critical aspect of this system

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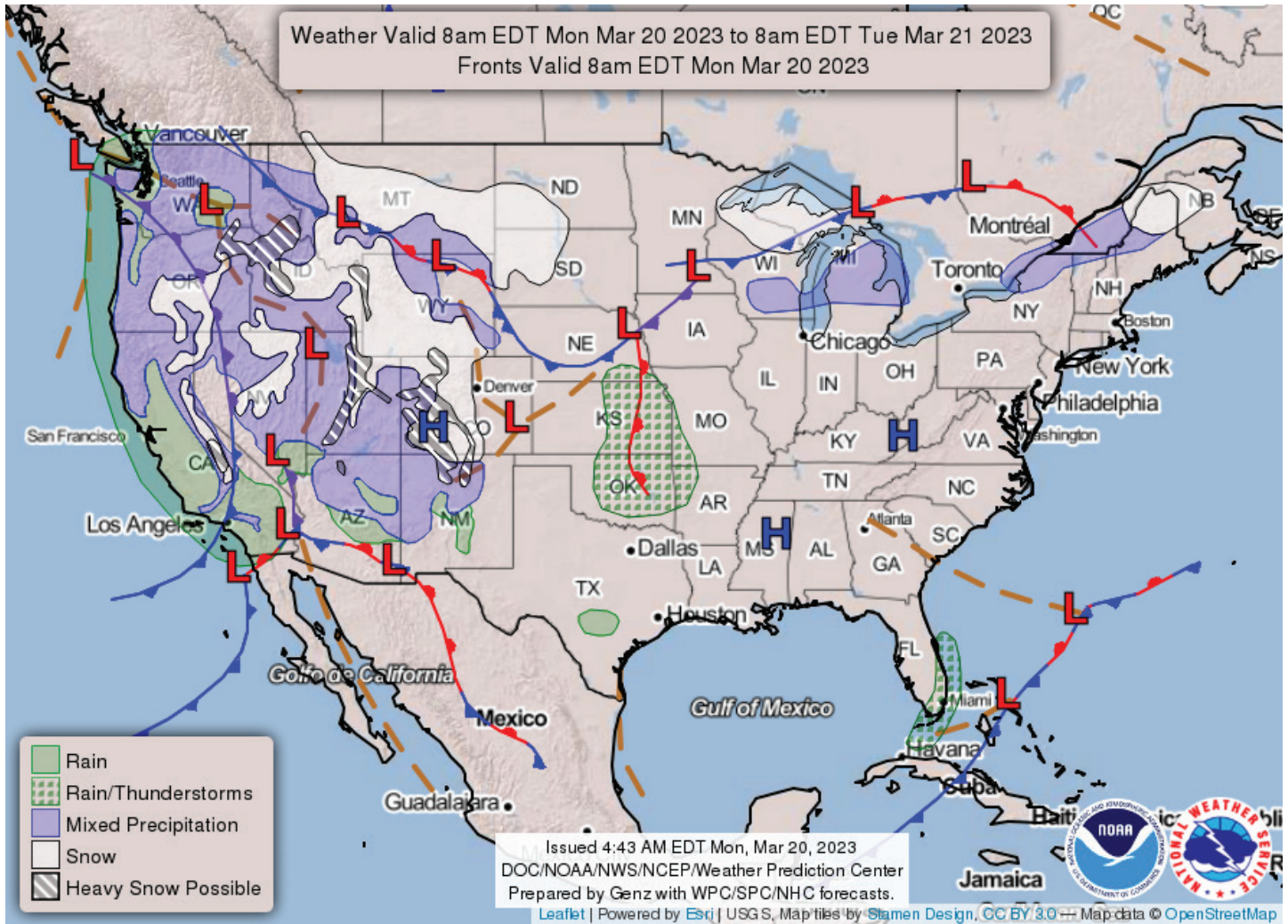
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 36 °F at 6:40 PM
Low Temp: 1 °F at 12:38 AM
Wind: 26 mph at 10:56 AM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 12 hours, 12 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 75 in 1910
Record Low: -6 in 1965
Average High: 44
Average Low: 21
Average Precip in March.: 0.52
Precip to date in March.: 1.20
Average Precip to date: 1.69
Precip Year to Date: 2.78
Sunset Tonight: 7:45:57 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:31:50 AM



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Today in Weather History

March 20, 1982: A winter storm dropped 10-20 inches of heavy wet snow across the northern two-thirds of South Dakota. Five persons were killed and eight others injured in indirect accidents. Downed power lines caused isolated power outages. A half dozen newborn calves died of exposure near Lemmon in Perkins County. Also, 5% of the pheasant population in Brown, Edmunds, and Faulk Counties were killed. The weight of the snow collapsed a canopy of a grocery store in McLaughlin, Corson County, tearing out part of the brick front and breaking windows in the store.

March 20, 2008: An upper-level disturbance coupled with an area of low pressure moving across the Central Plains brought widespread heavy snow from the late afternoon through the early morning hours to north-central and northeast South Dakota. Heavy snow of 6 to as much as 18 inches fell in this area resulting in school delays and cancelations along with treacherous travel conditions. Some snowfall amounts included: 6 inches at Bowdle, South Shore, and Bradley; 7 inches at Eureka, Chelsea, Bristol, and Pollock; 8 inches near Hosmer, Osaka, and Roscoe; 9 inches at Victor; 10 inches at Westport and Ipswich. Locations with a foot or more of snowfall included: 12 inches at Columbia, Milbank, and Waubay; 13 inches at Sisseton and Webster; 14 inches at Big Stone City; 15 inches at Summit; 16 inches at Roy Lake; 18 inches at Wilmot and Pickerel Lake State Park.

1924 - A late winter storm in Oklahoma produced nearly a foot of snow at Oklahoma City and at Tulsa. (David Ludlum)

1948: The city of Juneau received 31 inches of snow in 24 hours, a record for the Alaska Capitol. (20th - 21st)

Also, on this day, an F3 tornado tracked through Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma City, OK just before 10 pm destroying 54 aircraft, including 17 transport planes valued at \$500,000 apiece. The total damage amounted to more than \$10 million, a record for the state that stood until the massive tornado outbreak of 5/3/1999. Major Ernest W. Fawbush and Captain Robert C. Miller were ordered to see if operationally forecasting tornadoes were possible. The tornado prompted the first attempt at tornado forecasting. Forecasters at Tinker believed conditions were again favorable for tornadoes and issued the first recorded tornado forecast. Five days later, on 3/25 at 6 pm, a forecasted tornado occurred, crossing the prepared base, and the damage was minimized. The successful, albeit somewhat lucky forecast, paved the way for tornado forecasts to be issued by the U.S. Weather Bureau after a lengthy ban.

1984 - A severe three day winter storm came to an end over the Central Plains. The storm produced up to twenty inches of snow in Colorado, Nebraska and Kansas, and left a thick coat of ice from eastern Kansas across northwestern Missouri into Iowa. (Storm Data)

1986: Great Britain recorded its highest wind gust ever as the summit of Scotland's Cairngorm Mountains, at 4,085 feet, had a gust of 172 mph.

1987 - A storm produced blizzard conditions in Wyoming and eastern Nebraska, and severe thunderstorms in central Nebraska. Snowfall totals ranged up to 12 inches at Glenrock WY and Chadron NE. Thunderstorms in central Nebraska produced wind gusts to 69 mph at Valentine, and wind gusts to 76 mph at Bartley. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1998: A deadly tornado outbreak occurred over portions of the southeastern United States on this day. Particularly hard hit were rural areas outside of Gainesville, Georgia, where at least 12 people were killed during the early morning hours. The entire outbreak killed 14 people and produced 12 tornadoes across three states. The town of Stoneville, North Carolina, hard hit by the storms.

1988 - Squalls in the Great Lakes Region left up to eight inches of new snow on the ground in time for the official start of spring. Unseasonably warm weather prevailed in the western U.S. Seven cities reported new record high temperatures for the date, including Tucson AZ with a reading of 89 degrees. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Snow and high winds created blizzard conditions in western Kansas to usher in the official start of the spring season. Thunderstorms produced severe weather from east Texas to Alabama and northwest Florida, with nearly fifty reports of large hail and damaging winds during the afternoon and evening hours. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

WHERE THEY BELONG

Once I asked an appliance repairman to come to church with me. "No," he responded. "The church is full of hypocrites."

"Great!" I responded. The man was startled. Continuing, I said, "That's exactly where they belong. Let's join them. I'm sure they won't mind."

If I understand it correctly, a hypocrite is someone who says one thing and does another. Or as a friend said to me, "A hypocrite is a person who does not walk their talk. They profess what they do not possess."

Many who do not want to attend church say the reason they refuse to do so is because the church is full of hypocrites. For as long as I can remember that has been a frequent excuse of many. As I see it, it is a great reason for them to attend! They already know the difference between the saved and the unsaved. The saved are expected to behave like Jesus, and the person who says he sees hypocrisy in Christians already knows what is expected of the born again. So, the choice becomes easy. I'm in or I'm out. It's my choice.

We need to extend a warm welcome to those who use "the hypocrite factor" as an excuse not to attend church. Jesus said that He came to call sinners to be saved. Those who believe that they are already good enough will have a difficult time to admit they are sinners. But the hypocrite? Well, they already know the truth.

Prayer: Lord, help me to live a life that will be an example, not an excuse, for people to seek to avoid knowing You. May my life be meet Your expectations and goals. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. Luke 19:10



We all need the encouragement, comfort, and peace that comes through God's grace. Our daily devotionals, known as Seeds of Hope, have been a means through which thousands of people have experienced this grace. Each devotional comes from God's Word and we pray this good "seed" finds good soil in your heart. Our aim is that the Seeds of Hope will be a great source of daily encouragement to you and that God will use them to draw you near to Him

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2023 Community Events

- 01/29/2023 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed, 10am-1pm, Community Center
- 01/29/2023 85th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
- 01/31/2023-02/03/2023 Lion's Club Prom & Formal Dress Consignment Drop Off 6-9pm, Community Center
- 02/04/2023-02/05/2023 Lion's Club Prom & Formal Dress Consignment Sale 1-5pm, Community Center
- 02/25/2023 Littles and Me, Art Making 10-11:30am, Wage Memorial Library
- 03/25/2023 Spring Vendor Fair, 10am-3pm, Community Center
- 04/01/2023 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)
- 04/01/2023 Dueling Duo Baseball/Softball Fundraiser at the Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm
- 04/06/2023 Groton Career Development Event
- 04/22/2023 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 04/23/2023 Princess Prom 4:30-8pm (Sunday after GHS Prom)
- 05/06/2023 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/29/2023 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
- 06/16/2023 SDSU Alumni and Friends Golf Tournament
- 07/04/2023 Couples Firecracker Golf Tournament
- 07/09/2023 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
- 07/26/2023 GGA Burger Fundraiser Lunch at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 08/04/2023 Wine on Nine 6pm
- 08/11/2023 GHS Basketball Golf Tournament
- 09/09/2023 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 09/10/2023 Couples Sunflower Golf Tournament
- 10/14/2023 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
- 10/31/2023 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm (working day on or closest to Halloween)
- 10/31/2023 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
- 11/23/2023 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)
- 12/02/2023 Tour of Homes & Holiday Party
- 12/09/2023 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9-11am

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

03.17.23

26 28 29 39 49 25

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$272,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 15 Hrs 29

DRAW: Mins 46 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

03.18.23

35 37 44 45 46 1

All Star Bonus: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$39,780,000

NEXT 15 Hrs 29 Mins

DRAW: 46 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

03.19.23

23 27 30 37 47 3

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT 14 Hrs 59 Mins

DRAW: 46 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

03.18.23

1 13 19 22 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$20,000

NEXT 2 Days 15 Hrs 29

DRAW: Mins 46 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

03.18.23

21 30 34 57 59 8

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT 15 Hrs 28 Mins 46

DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

03.18.23

14 20 30 54 69 11

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$86,000,000

NEXT 15 Hrs 28 Mins 46

DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Amoore, Hokies advance to Sweet 16 of March Madness

JIMMY ROBERTSON Associated Press

BLACKSBURG, Va. (AP) — As the final seconds ticked off the clock, Virginia Tech's Georgia Amoore started raising her arms, imploring an already raucous Virginia Tech crowd to get even louder.

"It was just a big thank you to everyone," Amoore said. "That crowd was ridiculous. I said it once and I'll say it again — the stadium was shaking. It's really intimidating, and it was just electrifying. It's big for us getting to the Sweet 16, and it's also big for all of them."

The Virginia Tech faithful certainly had plenty of reasons for cheering, as Amoore scored 21 points and top seed Virginia Tech held off No. 9 seed South Dakota State 72-60 on Sunday in the second round of the NCAA Tournament's Seattle 3 Region.

Elizabeth Kitley added 14 points and 14 rebounds for the Hokies (29-4), who won their 13th consecutive game, to advance to the Sweet 16 for just the second time in program history. They will play the winner of Monday's matchup between No. 12 seed Toledo and No. 4 seed Tennessee.

"It means a lot to be a part of this," Virginia Tech coach Kenny Brooks said. "Hokie Nation is very special. ... When we can come out and do our part, it's very gratifying because this fan base is loyal. To be able to give back to them, when they've stuck with us and been patient with us, it's special."

Virginia Tech also set a school record with its 29th win, breaking the mark of 28 set by the 1998-99 squad — the only other team in school history to advance to the Sweet 16.

Myah Selland led South Dakota State (29-6) with 17 points and nine rebounds.

The Jackrabbits entered the game with a 22-game winning streak, but aided by a raucous home crowd, the Hokies — who set a school record with their 16th home victory this season — jumped on the Jackrabbits early and never trailed.

Virginia Tech held South Dakota State scoreless for the final 7:03 of the first quarter in taking a 19-7 lead, and then used a 10-0 run early in the second quarter to grab a 20-point advantage.

"We just didn't get off to a good enough start, obviously," South Dakota State coach Aaron Johnston said. "If you're going to beat a No. 1 (seed), the bottom line is you've got to have some things go your way, and you've got to have some things kind of go against them, and they shot it so well in that first half that that doesn't go our way."

South Dakota State made things interesting late in the fourth quarter, cutting the Virginia Tech lead to 66-56 on a three-point play by Selland with 3:13 remaining. But Amoore hit two of her seven 3-pointers in the final two minutes to seal the game.

Taylor Soule added 13 points for Virginia Tech and Kayana Traylor finished with 11.

"It would not surprise me if they went on and played in a Final Four and advanced," Johnston said. "They shoot the ball really well. They shoot it like that tonight, and they're going to beat a lot of teams. They're good enough defensively. They are so good in their spacing and so good in their execution. They're a really good team. Nothing would surprise me with how far they'd go."

BIG PICTURE

South Dakota State: Selland scored 29 in the Jackrabbits win over Southern Cal in the first round, but found the going much tougher against the Hokies, connecting on just 6 of 18 from the floor. She closed her career with 2,167 points, second on the school's career scoring list.

"I think just the people that I got to do it with," Selland said when asked what she will remember about her career. "They mean a lot to me, and I think we mean a lot to each other, and so I'm grateful to be a part of this program. But just more grateful who I got to do it with and who I was alongside the whole ride."

Virginia Tech: The Hokies have played worthy of their top seed, winning each of their first two games in the tournament by double figures. Defense continues to be this team's calling card in postseason play, as the Hokies held South Dakota State to just 37.3% (22 of 59) from the floor. In six postseason games,

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the Hokies have held all six opponents to under 40% shooting.

KITLEY ADDS TO COLLECTION

Kitley, a second-team All-American by the Associated Press, secured another school record when she became the school's all-time leader in blocked shots. Kitley blocked five shots against the Jackrabbits and now has 261 for her career. She went into the game tied with Ieva Kublina (2000-04) with 256.

Toledo seeks 1st Sweet 16 in March Madness against Lady Vols

By TERESA M. WALKER AP Sports Writer

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — The 12th-seeded Toledo Rockets know they're on the verge of program history — a win away from the first Sweet 16 for the Mid-American Conference Tournament champ.

Toledo junior guard Khera Goss said she's dreamed of this opportunity since she was a little girl.

"Growing up in a basketball family, this is something that I've been surrounded by, so the fact that it's our turn to be able to experience it and live it out is something that I can't even put into words," Goss said Sunday.

Thanks to a crash course in women's basketball history this week, they also fully understand the challenge Monday night when they play No. 4 seed Tennessee. They'll be on the court named for the late coach Pat Summitt, under rafters filled with her eight national championship banners.

Toledo coach Tricia Cullop, who during a recruiting trip accidentally took Summitt's rental car keys before realizing the BMW was not hers, called the Lady Vols a formidable opponent.

But the Rockets (29-4) want their own history by reaching the Sweet 16 in the Seattle 3 Region, and also want to extend their record streak to 18 straight wins.

"We're not just here to be here," Cullop said. "We're looking forward to the challenge. We're going to give it our best shot, you know, and see what happens."

Tennessee coach Kellie Harper, who helped win three of the Lady Vols' title banners between 1996 and 1998, has played and coached enough in March to know that every team still in it deserves to be here.

She also sees Toledo as a team deserving a much better seed, having knocked off then-No. 14 Michigan in December before beating No. 5 seed Iowa State 80-73 in the first round. Harper called Toledo disciplined, tough and very smart on defense.

"Where they might not ... have the size of some opponents, they're able to make up for that with how they play," Harper said. "So we know this is a very good basketball team. We're in for a big battle."

Her Lady Vols (24-11) want to add a new chapter to their vaunted tradition after routing Saint Louis 95-50 on Saturday.

This program ended its Sweet 16 drought a year ago by edging a No. 12 seed in Belmont with a late 3. Winning Monday night would mean Tennessee's first back-to-back trips to the Sweet 16 since 2015-16 and the 36th overall for the only program to play in all 41 NCAA Tournaments.

Tennessee junior Tess Darby said that would be really special.

"You come to the University of Tennessee, and you're supposed to be in those games," Darby said.

Tennessee lost center Tamari Key to blood clots in December. Marta Suarez stepped away from this season for personal reasons. Jessie Rennie tore an ACL last summer. The Lady Vols also played the nation's toughest schedule, losing eight to ranked teams — twice to No. 1 South Carolina.

Darby said this is a far different team than the one that started the season.

They also have guard Jordan Horston, who missed this tournament a year ago with an elbow injury, and Mississippi State transfer Rickea Jackson playing in the first NCAA Tournament of her career.

"We're just really prepared I feel like, and it's just given us that boost of confidence that we can compete with anyone," Darby said.

Toledo's biggest challenge will be dealing with Tennessee's decided height disadvantage. Forward Jessica Cook (6-foot-2) is one three Rockets who are 6 feet or taller. Tennessee's only starter under 6 feet? Point guard Jordan Walker, at 5-8.

"If we went out and played one-on-one they would win every time," Cullop said. "But the good thing is

we get to play five-on-five.”

China's Xi makes 1st Moscow visit as Putin wages Ukraine war

By The Associated Press undefined

Chinese leader Xi Jinping arrived in Moscow on Monday for a three-day visit that shows off Beijing's new swagger in world diplomatic affairs and offers a welcome political lift for Russian President Vladimir Putin just days after an international arrest warrant was issued for him on war crimes charges related to the war in Ukraine.

China and Russia have described Xi's trip as an opportunity to further deepen their "no-limits friendship." China looks to Russia as a source of oil and gas for its energy-hungry economy, and as a partner in standing up to what both see as U.S. domination of global affairs. The two countries also have held joint military drills.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that over dinner on Monday, Putin and Xi will touch on issues related to Ukraine, adding that Russia's president will likely offer a "detailed explanation" of Moscow's view on the current situation.

Broader talks involving officials from both countries on a range of subjects are scheduled for Tuesday, according to Peskov.

For Putin, Xi's presence at the Kremlin is a prestige visit and a diplomatic triumph, allowing him to tell Western leaders allied with Ukraine that their efforts to isolate him have fallen short.

In an article published in the Chinese People's Daily newspaper, Putin described Xi's visit as a "landmark event" that "reaffirms the special nature of the Russia-China partnership."

Putin also specifically mentioned that the meeting sent a message to Washington that the two countries aren't prepared to accept attempts to weaken them.

"The U.S. policy of simultaneously deterring Russia and China, as well as all those who do not bend to the American diktat, is getting ever fiercer and more aggressive," Putin wrote.

Xi's trip came after the International Criminal Court in The Hague announced Friday it wants to put Putin on trial for the abductions of thousands of children from Ukraine.

China portrays Xi's visit as part of normal diplomatic exchanges and has offered little detail about what the trip aims to accomplish, though the nearly 13 months of war in Ukraine cast a long shadow on the talks.

At a daily briefing in Beijing on Monday, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said Xi's trip was a "journey of friendship, cooperation and peace."

On the war, Wang said: "China will uphold its objective and fair position on the Ukrainian crisis and play a constructive role in promoting peace talks."

Beijing's leap into Ukraine issues follows its recent success in brokering talks between Iran and its chief Middle Eastern rival, Saudi Arabia, which agreed to restore their diplomatic ties after years of tensions.

Flushed with that success, Xi called for China to play a bigger role in managing global affairs.

"President Xi will have an in-depth exchange of views with President Putin on bilateral relations and major international and regional issues of common concern," Wang said.

He added that Xi aims to "promote strategic coordination and practical cooperation between the two countries and inject new impetus into the development of bilateral relations."

China last month called for a cease-fire and peace talks between Kyiv and Moscow. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy cautiously welcomed Beijing's involvement, but the overture fizzled.

The Kremlin has welcomed China's peace plan and said it would be discussed in talks between Putin and Xi that will begin over dinner.

Washington strongly rejected Beijing's call for a cease-fire as the effective ratification of the Kremlin's battlefield gains.

Kyiv officials say they won't bend in their terms for a peace accord.

"The first and main point is the capitulation or withdrawal of the Russian occupation troops from the territory of Ukraine in accordance with the norms of international law and the UN Charter," Oleksiy Danilov,

the secretary of Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council, tweeted on Monday.

That means restoring "sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity," he wrote.

The Kremlin doesn't recognize the authority of the the International Criminal Court and has rejected its move against Putin as "legally null and void." China, the United States and Ukraine don't recognize the ICC, either, but the court's announcement tarnished Putin's international standing.

China's foreign ministry on Monday called on the ICC to "respect the jurisdictional immunity" of a head of state and "avoid politicization and double standards."

Dmitry Medvedev, deputy head of Russia's Security Council, said Monday that the International Criminal Court's move to issue an arrest warrant for Putin will have "monstrous consequences" for international law.

"A gloomy sunset of the entire system of international relations is coming, trust is exhausted," Medvedev wrote on his messaging app channel.

He argued that in the past the ICC has destroyed its credibility by failing to prosecute the purported U.S. war crimes in Afghanistan and Iraq.

He also cautioned that the court in The Hague could be a target for a Russian missile strike. Medvedev has in the past made bombastic statements and claims.

Trump's call for protests gets muted reaction by supporters

By ERIC TUCKER and MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former President Donald Trump's calls for protests ahead of his anticipated indictment in New York have generated mostly muted reactions from supporters, with even some of his most ardent loyalists dismissing the idea as a waste of time or a law enforcement trap.

The ambivalence raises questions about whether Trump, though a leading Republican contender in the 2024 presidential race who retains a devoted following, still has the power to mobilize far-right supporters the way he did more than two years ago before the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the U.S. Capitol. It also suggests that the hundreds of arrests that followed the Capitol riot, not to mention the convictions and long prison sentences, may have dampened the desire for repeat mass unrest.

Still, law enforcement in New York is continuing to closely monitor online chatter warning of protests and violence if Trump is arrested, with threats varying in specificity and credibility, four officials told The Associated Press. Mainly posted online and in chat groups, the messages have included calls for armed protesters to block law enforcement officers and attempt to stop any potential arrest, the officials said.

The New York Young Republican Club has announced plans for a protest at an undisclosed location in Manhattan on Monday, and incendiary but isolated posts surfaced on fringe social media platforms from supporters calling for an armed confrontation with law enforcement at Trump's Florida estate, Mar-a-Lago.

But nearly two days after Trump claimed on his Truth Social platform that he expected to be arrested on Tuesday and exhorted followers to protest, there were few signs his appeal had inspired his supporters to organize and rally around an event like the Jan. 6 gathering. In fact, a prominent organizer of rallies that preceded the Capitol riot posted on Twitter that he intended to remain on the sidelines.

Ali Alexander, who as an organizer of the "Stop the Steal" movement staged rallies to promote Trump's baseless claims that Democrats stole the 2020 election from him, warned Trump supporters that they would be "jailed or worse" if they protested in New York City.

"You have no liberty or rights there," he tweeted.

One of Alexander's allies in the "Stop the Steal" campaign was conspiracy theorist Alex Jones, who amplified the election fraud claims on his Infowars show. Alexander posted that he had spoken to Jones and said that neither of them would be protesting this time around.

"We've both got enough going on fighting the government," Alexander wrote. "No billionaire is covering our bills."

That stands in contrast to the days before the Capitol riot when Trump stoked up supporters when he invited them to Washington for a "big protest" on a Jan. 6, tweeting, "Be there, will be wild!" Thousands of Trump supporters stormed the Capitol that day, busting through windows and violently clashing with

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officers in an ultimately failed effort to stop the congressional certification of Democrat Joe Biden's victory.

Since then, about 1,000 participants have been arrested, many racking up steep legal bills and expressing regret and contrition in court for their actions. Some have complained of feeling abandoned by Trump. And conspiracy theories that the riot was fueled or even set up by undercover law enforcement informants in the crowd have continued to flourish online, with Trump supporters citing that angst as a basis for steering clear of a new large-scale protest.

"How many Feds/Fed assets are in place to turn protest against the political arrest of Pres Trump into violence?" tweeted Rep. Marjorie-Taylor Greene. The Georgia Republican also invoked a conspiracy theory that an FBI informant had instigated the Jan. 6 riot.

"Has Ray Epps booked his flight to NY yet?" she tweeted on Sunday.

Epps, an Arizona man, was filmed encouraging others to enter the Capitol. Conspiracy theorists believe Epps was an FBI informant because he was removed from a Jan. 6 "wanted" list without being charged. In January, the House committee that investigated the Capitol attack said the claims about Epps were "unsupported."

John Scott-Railton, a senior researcher at Citizen Lab who has tracked the "Stop the Steal" movement online, said anxiety over being entrapped by so-called agent provocateurs feeds a "paranoia that if they go and do violence, they may get caught and there may be consequences."

"It seems to reduce a lot of people's willingness to make big statements about being willing to go out" and engage in violence, he said.

A grand jury is investigating hush money payments to women who alleged sexual encounters with Trump. Prosecutors have not said when their work might conclude or when charges could come.

The conflicted feelings over how far to support Trump in his fight against prosecution extends into the political realm. His own vice president, Mike Pence, who's expected to challenge Trump for the Republican nomination, castigated Trump in an ABC News interview this weekend as "reckless" for his actions on Jan. 6 and said history would hold him accountable — even as he echoed the former president's rhetoric that an indictment would be a "politically charged prosecution."

"I have no doubt that President Trump knows how to take care of himself. And he will. But that doesn't make it right to have a politically charged prosecution of a former president of the United States of America," Pence said.

The opening day of the House Republican conference in Orlando, Florida, was quickly overshadowed with the news of a potential indictment. Speaker Kevin McCarthy and other House Republicans called the possibility outrageous and criticized District Attorney Alvin Bragg for what they called "reckless crime" in New York City.

McCarthy said he has assembled congressional investigators to probe if Bragg used Justice Department grants to pursue the Trump case. But despite the heated rhetoric toward Bragg, Republican leaders stopped short of Trump's calls for protesters to "take our nation back."

"I don't think people should protest this. I think President Trump, when you talk to him, he doesn't think that, either," McCarthy said.

Report: 43,000 estimated dead in Somalia drought last year

By CARA ANNA Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — A new report says an estimated 43,000 people died amid the longest drought on record in Somalia last year and half of them likely were children.

It is the first official death toll announced in the drought withering large parts of the Horn of Africa.

At least 18,000 people are forecast to die in the first six months of this year.

"The current crisis is far from over," says the report released Monday by the World Health Organization and the United Nations children's agency and carried out by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

Somalia and neighboring Ethiopia and Kenya are facing a sixth consecutive failed rainy season while

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rising global food prices complicate the hunger crisis.

The U.N. and partners earlier this year said they were no longer forecasting a formal famine declaration for Somalia for now but called the situation "extremely critical" with more than 6 million people hungry in that country alone.

Famine is the extreme lack of food and a significant death rate from outright starvation or malnutrition combined with diseases like cholera. A formal famine declaration means data shows more than a fifth of households have extreme food gaps, more than 30% of children are acutely malnourished and over two people out of 10,000 are dying every day.

Some humanitarian and climate officials this year have warned that trends are worse than in the 2011 famine in Somalia in which a quarter-million people died.

Millions of livestock have died in the current crisis compounded by climate change and insecurity as Somalia battles thousands of fighters with al-Qaida's East Africa affiliate, al-Shabab. The U.N. migration agency says 3.8 million people are displaced, a record high.

A food security assessment released last month said nearly a half-million children in Somalia are likely to be severely malnourished this year.

This time, the world is looking elsewhere, many humanitarian officials say.

"Many of the traditional donors have washed their hands and focused on Ukraine," the U.N. resident coordinator in Somalia, Adam Abdelmoula, told the visiting U.S. ambassador to the U.N., Linda Thomas-Greenfield, during a briefing in Mogadishu in January.

Credit Suisse, UBS shares plunge after takeover announcement

By JAMEY KEATEN and KEN SWEET Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — Shares of Credit Suisse plunged 60.5% in early trading Monday after the announcement that banking giant UBS would buy its troubled rival for almost \$3.25 billion in a deal orchestrated by regulators to stave off further market-shaking turmoil in the global banking system.

UBS shares also were down 8% on the Swiss stock exchange.

Swiss authorities urged UBS to take over its smaller rival after a plan for Credit Suisse to borrow up to 50 billion francs (\$54 billion) failed to reassure investors and the bank's customers. Shares of Credit Suisse and other banks plunged last week after the failure of two banks in the U.S. raised questions about other potentially weak global financial institutions.

Markets remained jittery Monday despite the best efforts of regulators to restore calm. In the U.S., the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. announced late Sunday that New York Community Bank has agreed to buy a significant chunk of the failed Signature Bank in a \$2.7 billion deal.

Global stock markets sank, with Hong Kong's main index sliding more than 3%. Market benchmarks in Frankfurt and Paris opened down more than 1%, with European banking stocks dropping more than 2%. Shanghai, Tokyo and Sydney also declined. Wall Street futures were off 1%.

Credit Suisse is among 30 financial institutions known as globally systemically important banks, and authorities were worried about the fallout if it were to fail.

"An uncontrolled collapse of Credit Suisse would lead to incalculable consequences for the country and the international financial system," Swiss President Alain Berset said as he announced the deal Sunday night.

UBS is bigger but Credit Suisse wields considerable influence, with \$1.4 trillion assets under management. It has significant trading desks around the world, caters to the rich through its wealth management business, and is a major mergers and acquisitions advisor. The bank did weather the 2008 financial crisis without assistance, unlike UBS.

Many of its current problems are unique and unlike the weaknesses that brought down Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank in the U.S. It has faced an array of troubles in recent years, including bad bets on hedge funds, repeated shake-ups of its top management and a spying scandal involving UBS.

Those troubles resurfaced last week after it reported managers had identified "material weaknesses" in its internal controls on financial reporting. Shares plunged Wednesday after its largest investor, the Saudi

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National Bank, said it wouldn't invest any more money in the bank to avoid triggering regulations that would kick in if its stake rose about 10%.

Switzerland's executive branch passed an emergency ordinance allowing the merger to go through without shareholder approval.

As part of the deal, approximately 16 billion francs (\$17.3 billion) in Credit Suisse bonds will be wiped out. That has triggered concern about the market for those bonds and for other banks that hold them.

The combination of the two biggest and best-known Swiss banks, each with storied histories dating to the mid-19th century, amounts to a thunderclap for Switzerland's reputation as a global financial center — putting it on the cusp of having a single national banking champion.

The deal follows the collapse of two large U.S. banks last week that spurred a frantic, broad response from the U.S. government to prevent further panic.

Credit Suisse Chairman Axel Lehmann called the sale to UBS "a clear turning point."

"It is a historic, sad and very challenging day for Credit Suisse, for Switzerland and for the global financial markets," Lehmann said, adding that the focus is now on the future and on what's next for Credit Suisse's 50,000 employees — 17,000 of whom are in Switzerland.

Also Sunday, the world's central banks announced coordinated moves to stabilize banks, including access to a lending facility for banks to borrow U.S. dollars if they need them, a practice widely used during the 2008 crisis.

"Today is one of the most significant days in European banking since 2008, with far-reaching repercussions for the industry," said Max Georgiou, an analyst at Third Bridge. "These events could alter the course of not only European banking but also the wealth management industry more generally."

Colm Kelleher, the UBS chairman, hailed "enormous opportunities" from the takeover and highlighted his bank's "conservative risk culture" — a subtle swipe at Credit Suisse's reputation for more swashbuckling gambles in search of bigger returns. He said the combined group would create a wealth manager with over \$5 trillion in total invested assets.

UBS officials said they plan to sell off parts of Credit Suisse or reduce the bank's size.

Swiss Finance Minister Karin Keller-Sutter said the Federal Council, the country's executive branch, "regrets that the bank, which was once a model institution in Switzerland and part of our strong location, was able to get into this situation at all."

European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde lauded the "swift action" by Swiss officials, saying they were "instrumental for restoring orderly market conditions and ensuring financial stability."

She reiterated that the European banking sector is resilient, with strong financial reserves and plenty of ready cash. The Credit Suisse parent bank is not part of European Union supervision, but it has entities in several European countries that are.

Last week, when the ECB raised interest rates, she said banks "are in a completely different position from 2008" during the financial crisis, partly because of stricter government regulation.

The Swiss government is providing more than 100 billion francs to support the takeover.

Berset said the Federal Council had been discussing Credit Suisse's troubles since early this year and held urgent meetings last week.

Investors and banking industry analysts were still digesting the deal, but at least one analyst suggested it might tarnish Switzerland's global banking image.

"A country-wide reputation with prudent financial management, sound regulatory oversight, and, frankly, for being somewhat dour and boring regarding investments, has been wiped away," Octavio Marenzi, CEO of consulting firm Opimas LLC, said in an email.

New this week: 'Top Gun,' Lana Del Rey and 'Rabbit Hole'

By The Associated Press undefined

Here's a collection curated by The Associated Press' entertainment journalists of what's arriving on TV, streaming services and music and video game platforms this week.

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MOVIES

— The Oscar-nominated “All the Beauty and the Bloodshed” was one of the high points in documentary in the past year. In it, Laura Poitras chronicles the pioneering photographer Nan Goldin, juxtaposing an intimate survey of her groundbreaking work in 1970s and 1980s New York and her contemporary crusade against the Sackler family, owners of the Oxycontin-maker Purdue Pharma. Goldin, who has herself wrestled with addiction, led the campaign to eradicate the Sackler name from many of the world’s top museums. Though the film didn’t win at the Oscars — something Goldin told me she was surprised to find she wanted — it took the top prize of the Venice Film Festival. In her review, AP Film Writer Lindsey Bahr called the film “a holistic portrait of an artist’s battle cry.” After debuting Sunday, March 19, “All the Beauty and the Bloodshed” is available to stream on HBO Max.

— “Top Gun: Maverick” did come away with an Academy Award, for best sound. But one of the biggest box office hits of the year otherwise struck out at the Oscars. After an uncommonly long run in theaters, a lucrative stop on video on demand and a streaming launch on Paramount+, “Top Gun Maverick” arrives on a larger streaming platform Friday, March 24th, when it touches down on Amazon’s Prime Video. In his review, AP Entertainment Writer Mark Kennedy called “Maverick” “a textbook example of how to make a sequel.”

— This month, the Criterion Channel has been paying tribute to the greatest comic artist of the 20th century: Buster Keaton. With five features and more than a dozen shorts, the series is an unbeatable feast. You can’t go wrong but a few highlights: Keaton’s glorious Olympic finale in “College”; his deft ladder balancing act in “Cops”; and his escape, through a high window, from an angry police chief-slash-furious-father in “The Goat.” With apologies to Charlie Chaplin and Harold Lloyd, nobody did it better.

— AP Film Writer Jake Coyle

MUSIC

— Fans of Lana Del Rey got two albums in 2021 — “Chemtrails Over the Country Club” and “Blue Banisters” but nothing full-length in 2022. Now she’s got “Did You Know That There’s a Tunnel Under Ocean Blvd” set to drop Friday, March 24. One of the singles, “A&W,” offers a glimpse at the sing-songwriter’s bleak poetry: “Puts the shower on while he calls me/Slips out the back door to talk to me/I’m invisible, look how you hold me/I’m a ghost now.” The album features Jack Antonoff, Father John Misty, Jon Batiste and more.

— Back in 1984, Phil Collins and Philip Bailey had a hit with the song “Easy Lover.” These days, UK pop star Ellie Goulding and Big Sean have a song with the same title that’s just as infectiously fun, part of Goulding’s 11-track album “Higher Than Heaven.” The songs marry her ethereal voice to strong dance hooks, from the ’80s-inspired “By the End of the Night” and “Just 4 You” to the modern pop of “Cure for Love.”

— Do you have what it takes to be a country music’s next big star? Then tune into Apple TV+’s “My Kind of Country,” in which Jimmie Allen, Mickey Guyton and Orville Peck search for talented amateur artists and invite them to Nashville, Tennessee, for a showcase. Reese Witherspoon and Kacey Musgraves also are featured in the series, set to premiere globally on Friday, March 24.

— 6lack is 6ack! The Atlanta singer-songwriter and rapper known as 6lack — pronounced “black” — returns with “Since I Have a Lover,” his first album in nearly five years. The title track is a airy, sweet ode to love with the lyrics: “Feel like a million bucks or somethin’/ Feel like we need to be up to somethin’/ Not tryna press my luck or nothin’/Don’t wanna love you just for fun.” The artist, raised in Zone 6 of Atlanta, has been doing a lot of collaborations since his last album, including Lil Tjay’s “Calling My Phone” and more recently Jessie Reyez’s “Forever.”

— AP Entertainment Writer Mark Kennedy

TELEVISION

— Fans of shows including “Jack Ryan” and “The Recruit,” about low-level government agency workers who get pulled into danger and secret missions, should check out “The Night Agent” on Netflix. It follows an FBI agent tasked with manning an overnight emergency phone that surprisingly rings during one of his shifts. A desperate civilian is on the other end of the call and together, they find themselves embroiled in a major government conspiracy. The series stars Gabriel Russo and Luciane Buchanan and is based on the novel by Matthew Quirk. “The Night Agent” debuts Thursday.

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— Mae Whitman, best-known for her roles in “Parenthood” and “Good Girls,” demonstrates she can also sing in her new rom-com series “Up Here” for Hulu. Set in 1999 in New York, Whitman plays Lindsay who falls for Miguel — played by Carlos Valdes (“The Flash” and “Gaslit”) — and the will-they, won’t-they find a happily ever after ensues. The series boasts some major behind-the-scenes musical talent. EGOT winners Kristen Anderson-Lopez and Robert Lopez, behind that little animated film that could “Frozen,” are co-executive producers and wrote the show’s original music. The show has a whimsical, “Zoey’s Extraordinary Playlist”-vibe, plus there are fun late-’90s references including Y2K. All eight-episodes drop Friday, March 24, the same day the soundtrack drops

— Kiefer Sutherland is back with another high-stakes TV drama in “Rabbit Hole” for Paramount+. He plays John Weir, a corporate spy skilled in the art of deception — until he finds the rug pulled out from underneath him and he is framed for murder. Weir goes from having total control to none, and unsure of who can be trusted. “Rabbit Hole” premieres with two episodes on Sunday, March 26.

— Alicia Rancilio

VIDEO GAMES

— Annapurna Interactive has developed a nearly impeccable reputation among connoisseurs of indie video games, from 2017’s groundbreaking mystery What Remains of Edith Finch to 2022’s futuristic cat sim Stray. The publisher’s latest release is Storyteller, a long-brewing project from Argentine designer Daniel Benmergui. The premise is simple: You have a library of characters, objects, events and other plot devices, and your job is arrange them to tell a particular type of tale. It’s a puzzle game that pays homage to classic literature, and the graphics ooze charm. Start spinning your own yarns Thursday, March 23, on Nintendo Switch and PC.

— Death, the CEO of Death Inc., is burned out. His top minions — the executives in charge of Natural Disasters, Modern Warfare, Toxic Food-Processing and other misery-producing departments — are going about their business way too enthusiastically, and Death needs them to settle down before he drowns in paperwork. In Have a Nice Death, from France’s Magic Design Studios, you wield Death’s scythe as he hacks and slashes his way through the red tape. The vibrant, angular 2D graphics are reminiscent of the classic Rayman, which some members of Magic Design’s team worked on. The not-so-grim reaping comes to Nintendo Switch and PC on Wednesday.

— Lou Kesten

Digital literacy: Can the republic ‘survive an algorithm’?

By DAVID KLEPPER and MANUEL VALDES Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — Shawn Lee, a high school social studies teacher in Seattle, wants to see lessons on the internet akin to a kind of 21st century driver’s education, an essential for modern life.

Lee has tried to bring that kind of education into his classroom, with lessons about the need to double-check online sources, to diversify newsfeeds and to bring critical thinking to the web. He’s also created an organization for other teachers to share resources.

“This technology is so new that no one taught us how to use it,” Lee said. “People are like, ‘There’s nothing we can do,’ and they throw their hands in the air. I disagree with that. I would like to think the republic can survive an algorithm.”

Lee’s efforts are part of a growing movement of educators and misinformation researchers working to offset an explosion of online misinformation about everything from presidential politics to pandemics. So far, the U.S. lags many other democracies in waging this battle, and the consequences of inaction are clear.

But for teachers already facing myriad demands in the classroom, incorporating internet literacy can be a challenge — especially given how politicized misinformation about vaccines, public health, voting, climate change and Russia’s war in Ukraine has become. The title of a talk for a recent gathering of Lee’s group: “How to talk about conspiracy theories without getting fired.”

“It’s not teaching what to think, but how to think,” said Julie Smith, an expert on media literacy who

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teaches at Webster University in Webster Groves, Missouri. "It's engaging about engaging your brain. It's asking, 'Who created this? Why? Why am I seeing it now? How does it make me feel and why?'"

New laws and algorithm changes are often offered as the most promising ways of combating online misinformation, even as tech companies study their own solutions.

Teaching internet literacy, however, may be the most effective method. New Jersey, Illinois and Texas are among states that have recently implemented new standards for teaching internet literacy, a broad category that can include lessons about how the internet and social media work, along with a focus on how to spot misinformation by cross-checking multiple sources and staying wary of claims with missing context or highly emotional headlines.

Media literacy lessons are often included in history, government or other social studies classes, and typically offered at the high school level, though experts say it's never too early — or late — to help people become better users of the internet.

Finnish children begin to learn about the internet in preschool, part of a robust anti-misinformation program that aims to make the country's residents more resistant to false online claims. Finland has a long history of combating propaganda and misinformation spread by one of its neighbors, Russia, and expanded its current efforts after Russia's 2014 invasion of Crimea set off another wave of disinformation.

"Media literacy was one of our priorities before the time of the internet," Petri Honkonen, Finland's minister of science and culture, said in a recent interview. "The point is critical thinking, and that is a skill that everybody needs more and more. We have to somehow protect people. We also must protect democracy."

Honkonen spoke with The Associated Press earlier this year during a trip to Washington that included meetings to discuss Finland's work to fight online misinformation. One recent report on media literacy efforts in western democracies placed Finland at the top. Canada ranked seventh, while the U.S. came in at No. 18.

In Finland the lessons don't end with primary school. Public service announcements offer tips on avoiding false online claims and checking multiple sources. Additional programs are geared toward older adults, who can be especially vulnerable to misinformation compared to younger users more at home on the internet.

In the U.S., attempts to teach internet literacy have run into political opposition from people who equate it to thought control. Lee, the Seattle teacher, said that concern prevents some teachers from even trying.

Several years ago, the University of Washington launched MisinfoDay, which brought high schoolers and their teachers together for a one-day event featuring speakers, exercises and activities focused on media literacy. Seven hundred students from across the state attended one of three MisinfoDays this year.

Jevin West, the University of Washington professor who created the event, said he's heard from educators in other states and as far away as Australia who are interested in creating something similar.

"Maybe eventually, someday, nationally here in the United States, we have a day devoted to the idea of media literacy," West said. "There are all sorts of things we can do in terms of regulations, technology, in terms of research, but nothing is going to be more important than this idea of making us more resilient" to misinformation.

For teachers already struggling with other classroom demands, adding media literacy can seem like just one more obligation. But it's a skill that is just as important as computer engineering or software coding for the future economy, according to Erin McNeill, a Massachusetts mother who started Media Literacy Now, a national nonprofit that advocates for digital literacy education.

"This is an innovation issue," McNeill said. "Basic communication is part of our information economy, and there will be huge implications for our economy if we don't get this right."

The driver's education analogy comes up a lot when talking to media literacy experts. Automobiles first went into production in the early 20th century and soon became popular. But it was nearly three decades before the first driver's education courses were offered.

What changed? Governments passed laws regulating vehicle safety and driver behavior. Auto companies added features like collapsible steering columns, seat belts and air bags. And in the mid-1930s, safety advocates began to push for mandated driver's education.

That combination of government, industry and educators is seen as a model by many misinformation

and media literacy researchers. Any effective solution to the challenges posed by online misinformation, they say, must by necessity include an educational component.

Media literacy in Canadian schools began decades ago and initially focused on television before being expanded throughout the digital era. Now it's accepted as an essential part of preparing students, according to Matthew Johnson, director of education at MediaSmarts, an organization that leads media literacy programs in Canada.

"We need speed limits, we need well-designed roads and good regulations to ensure cars are safe. But we also teach people how to drive safely," he said. "Whatever regulators do, whatever online platforms do, content always winds up in front of an audience, and they need to have the tools to engage critically with it."

Biden's appeals court nominee faces rare Democratic scrutiny

By SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — One of President Joe Biden's nominees to a federal appeals court has generated rare concern from some Democrats and outside groups over his signature on a legal brief defending a parental notification law in New Hampshire, injecting the issue of abortion into his confirmation fight from an unexpected flank.

Michael Delaney, nominated for the 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, based in Boston, said in written testimony to senators that he did not write the 2005 brief and otherwise had "extremely limited involvement" in the case that was brought while he was deputy attorney general in New Hampshire.

But the signing of the brief, along with scrutiny of his representation of St. Paul's School, a private boarding school in New Hampshire that was sued in connection with a sexual assault, is complicating a confirmation fight in which the White House has little room for error.

The close attention on an abortion case also shows how stakes are ever-higher in a post-Roe v. Wade world. Access to abortion could hinge on lower-level judges now that the U.S. Supreme Court has overturned the constitutional right to the procedure and advocates on both sides want near-certainty as they assess nominees. The issue helped derail one proposed Biden pick last summer when the White House decided not to nominate an anti-abortion lawyer in Kentucky following an outcry from Democrats.

Delaney's case will test how far Biden will push Democrats to support his nominees to the federal bench even after the White House set records in the number of appointments in his first two years. It will also test the power of personal persuasion in the clubby Senate, whose members can often be influenced by fellow members whose counsel they trust.

In this case, both New Hampshire Democratic senators, Jeanne Shaheen and Maggie Hassan, strongly back Delaney and are deeply respected by other senators. Both are also fierce supporters of abortion rights.

At issue is a New Hampshire law, passed in 2003 but repealed in 2007, that required minors to tell their parents before they obtained an abortion. As the state's deputy attorney general, Delaney was among those who signed a brief submitted to the U.S. Supreme Court that defended the law because it "does not present a substantial obstacle to any woman's right to choose an abortion."

The law, according to the brief filed in the case, *Ayotte vs. Planned Parenthood of Northern New England*, "promotes compelling state interests, not the least of which is protecting the health of the pregnant minor by providing an opportunity for parents to supply essential medical history information to the physician."

Delaney's involvement is detailed in response to written questions from Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., that he submitted after his confirmation hearing last month. But his signature on the brief has caused consternation for Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee and a strong supporter of abortion rights.

"For me personally, reproductive rights is a fundamental, core issue," Blumenthal told The Associated Press. "And I think I'd want to know why he put his name on the brief and what it reflects in his personal view."

Besides Blumenthal, two other Democratic members of the closely divided Senate, Cory Booker of

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New Jersey and Mazie Hirono of Hawaii, have also expressed general reservations about his nomination, particularly as it relates to the St. Paul's case. And at least one other Democrat on the Senate Judiciary Committee is concerned about Delaney's involvement in the Planned Parenthood case, according to a person familiar with the senator's thinking who spoke to the AP on the condition of anonymity to discuss ongoing deliberations over the nomination.

One factor being weighed is how much Delaney's involvement in the brief was just a matter of course in his job. Delaney told senators that he was not involved in the decision to appeal the case to the Supreme Court, nor did he represent New Hampshire during oral arguments there. He was not directly involved in formulating the brief's arguments, he said, and while he read the brief before it was submitted, he said he does not recall whether he offered substantive feedback.

In a statement to the AP, former New Hampshire Gov. John Lynch, a Democrat, said: "Mike Delaney strongly supports women's reproductive freedom."

Lynch said he disagreed with then-Attorney General Kelly Ayotte on the Planned Parenthood case. "When Mike became my legal counsel, he worked with me to successfully repeal the law at issue in the case," he said.

Still, in private conversations, groups that support abortion access have similarly raised questions about why Delaney signed a brief that defended abortion restrictions. They have been dissatisfied with the responses.

In a previously unreported letter, the National Council of Jewish Women said it would oppose the confirmation of Delaney, the first nominee from the Biden administration that it has rejected. The group pointed to his representation of St. Paul's as well as to his signature on the Planned Parenthood brief.

Saying federal judges should have a record that "evidences fairness, independence, fidelity to constitutional values, and respect for the individuals who appear before the court seeking justice," the group wrote in the letter that "unfortunately, after reviewing the record, we do not think that Mr. Delaney possesses those important qualifications."

The White House continues to support Delaney's nomination. Privately, White House officials are concerned that focusing on one motion or case could set a precedent for Republican opponents of Biden's picks to undermine other candidates for the bench, according to a person with knowledge of the internal deliberations who insisted on anonymity to discuss them.

"This was the first we had heard that anyone was interested in more information beyond his 116 pages of thorough, under-oath answers," White House spokesman Andrew Bates said in a statement. "Michael Delaney has three decades of legal experience, including his service as Attorney General and Deputy Attorney General of New Hampshire, and he is well-qualified to serve in this important position. The White House expects Senators to take his full record into account when evaluating his nomination."

Planned Parenthood Federation of America, a potent political force in Democratic politics, was noncommittal on Delaney's nomination, saying in a statement: "Planned Parenthood conducts a review of the records of federal judicial nominees. Our review of this nominee and his involvement in the Ayotte case is ongoing."

Biden nominated Delaney for the appeals court in January, almost a year after Shaheen's office first contacted him to discuss filling the vacancy. Since then, Shaheen and Hassan have been Delaney's biggest patrons, despite a rocky confirmation hearing that even Democrats say did not go well for him after he faced repeated questions from Republican senators who attacked his handling of the St. Paul's case.

Shaheen and Hassan have worked privately to lobby colleagues. In a closed-door lunch with other Democratic senators earlier this month, Shaheen and Hassan made their case while offering what attendees described as more context and history on his involvement in the St. Paul's case. During that meeting, the two senators also distributed copies of an endorsement letter from Susan Carbon, a longtime state judge in New Hampshire who served as director of the Office on Violence Against Women during the Obama administration.

"He has the experience, the intellect, the character and commitment to justice, and a broad, broad

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amount of support, including from advocates for victims," Hassan said. Delaney has been rated well qualified by the American Bar Association, and Judiciary Committee Chairman Dick Durbin, D-Ill., says he will support him.

Still, concerns persist among a handful of Democrats.

Booker said he had some "preliminary concerns" about how Delaney handled the sexual assault case. Hirono said she was prepared to support him after his confirmation hearing but said she was now reviewing his written testimony and added: "So we shall see."

Blumenthal added: "Having concerns doesn't necessarily mean that any of us will oppose his nomination." Still, most Democrats on the committee said they were undecided on whether to confirm him.

Global stocks sink after Credit Suisse takeover

By JOE McDONALD AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — Global stock markets sank Monday after Swiss authorities arranged the takeover of troubled Credit Suisse amid fears of a global banking crisis ahead of a Federal Reserve meeting to decide on more possible interest rate hikes.

Hong Kong's main index slid 2.7%. London, Frankfurt and Paris opened down more than 1%. Shanghai, Tokyo and Sydney also declined. Wall Street futures were off 1%. Oil prices plunged more than \$2 per barrel.

Swiss authorities on Sunday announced UBS would acquire its smaller rival as regulators try to ease fears about banks following the collapse of two U.S. lenders. Central banks announced coordinated efforts to stabilize lenders, including a facility to borrow U.S. dollars if necessary.

Switzerland's share benchmark was down 1.8%, while Credit Suisse's shares plunged 63% and rival UBS, which is acquiring it, sank 14%.

Investors worry banks are cracking under the strain of unexpectedly fast, large rate hikes over the past year to cool economic activity and inflation. Prices of bonds and other assets on their books fell, fueling unease about the industry's financial health.

"Investors are waiting to see where the dust settles on the banking saga before making any bold moves," said Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management in a report.

In early trading, the FTSE 100 in London lost 1.6% to 7,220.62. Frankfurt's DAX fell 1.4% to 14,555.79 and the CAC 40 in Paris lost 1.2% to 6,842.36.

European banks' shares languished, with Deutsche Bank AG losing 3.7% and Banco Santander SA slipping 1%. Societe Generale lost 3.4% and Credit Agricole fell 1.1%.

On Wall Street, the future for the benchmark S&P 500 index was off 0.2%. That for the Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 0.4%. On Friday, the S&P 500 lost 1.1%. The Dow fell 1.2% and the Nasdaq composite lost 0.7%.

In Asia, the Hang Seng in Hong Kong lost 2.7% Monday to 18,879.20 after being down 3.3% at one point on heavy selling of technology and financial shares.

In Hong Kong, HSBC Holdings plc dropped 6.23% while Standard Chartered fell 7.3% and Bank of East Asia gave up 4.5%. Japanese banks also were mostly lower, with Mizuho Financial Group shedding 2.3% and smaller bank Resona Holdings down 3.7%. In Australia, Macquarie Group sank 4.6%.

The Nikkei 225 in Tokyo shed 1.4% to 26,945.67.

The Shanghai Composite Index lost 0.5% to 3,234.91 after the Chinese central bank on Friday freed up more money for lending by reducing the amount of their deposits commercial lenders are required to hold in reserve.

The Kospi in Seoul retreated 0.7% to 2,379.20 and Sydney's S&P-ASX 200 lost 1.4% to 6,898.50.

India's Sensex lost 1.3% to 57,241.45. New Zealand and Southeast Asian markets also declined.

The Swiss government said UBS will acquire Credit Suisse for almost \$3.25 billion after a plan for the troubled lender to borrow as much as \$54 billion from Switzerland's central bank failed to reassure investors and customers.

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U.S. regulators have also tried to calm fears over threats to banking systems. The Federal Reserve said cash-short banks had borrowed about \$300 billion in the week up to Thursday.

Separately, New York Community Bank agreed to buy part of failed Signature Bank in a \$2.7 billion deal, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. said Sunday. The FDIC said \$60 billion in Signature Bank's loans will remain in receivership and are expected to be sold off in time.

Traders expect last week's turmoil to lead the Fed to limit a rate hike at this week's meeting to 0.25 percentage points. That would be the same as the previous increase and half the margin traders expected earlier.

A survey released Friday by the University of Michigan showed inflation expectations among American consumers are falling. That matters to the Fed, which has said such expectations can feed into virtuous and vicious cycles.

In energy markets, benchmark U.S. crude plunged \$2.45 to \$64.29 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract fell \$1.61 on Friday to \$66.74. Brent crude, the price basis for international oil, lost \$2.67 to \$70.30 per barrel in London. It retreated \$1.73 the previous session to \$72.97.

The dollar declined to 131.27 yen from Friday's 131.67 yen. The euro retreated to \$1.0664 from \$1.0681.

March Madness: Sweet 16 matchups are set after wild weekend

By The Associated Press undefined

March Madness is heading to the Sweet 16 without a handful of top teams. Two No. 1 seeds, Kansas and Purdue, No. 2 seed Arizona and No. 4 seed Virginia are all gone — and gone with them are millions of busted brackets.

It's been tough sledding for the bluebloods, too: Besides Kansas, Kentucky, Duke and Indiana are all heading home. UCLA's drive for a 12th national title remains alive.

Here is what to know with the regional semifinals up next at the NCAA Tournament:

TOP SEEDS

The top four seeds in the tournament were given to Alabama, Houston, Kansas and Purdue. Each had its share of headaches to set up what is proving to be a chaotic tournament. The Boilermakers were the first to fall, ousted in a first-round stunner, and the Jayhawks followed the very next day.

EAST REGION: The Boilermakers got a top seed for the fourth time, but Purdue was dumped by Fairleigh Dickinson in a near-historic upset. and the 2-seed, Marquette, is also gone. Up next: No. 9 seed FAU vs. No. 4 seed Tennessee and No. 3 seed Kansas State vs. No. 7 seed Michigan State, whose coach Tom Izzo is heading to his 15th regional.

SOUTH REGION: Alabama, led by coach Nate Oats in a challenging season, got a top seed for the first time behind SEC player of the year Brandon Miller, who has armed security on hand after being the subject of threats. Up next: No. 1 seed Alabama vs. No. 5 seed San Diego State and No. 6 seed Creighton vs. No. 15 seed Princeton, which is in rare territory.

MIDWEST REGION: Houston got a top seed and won its opener before a rugged victory over Auburn even with All-American Marcus Sasser hobbled by a groin injury. Up next: No. 1 seed Houston vs. No. 5 seed Miami and No. 2 seed Texas vs. No. 3 seed Xavier.

WEST REGION: Kansas, the top-seeded defending national champion that was without coach Bill Self in the tournament following a heart procedure, blew an 8-point halftime lead and lost to Arkansas. Up next: No. 2 seed UCLA vs. No. 3 Gonzaga and No. 4 seed UConn vs. No. 8 seed Arkansas.

SHINING MOMENTS

The unforgettable plays are piling up.

Princeton used a late run to earn its first NCAA Tournament win in 25 years by ousting No. 2 seed Arizona and then answered any skeptics by rolling Missouri to lock in its first Sweet 16 spot in 56 years.

Furman celebrated its first tourney appearance since 1980 with a win over No. 4 seed Virginia on a deep 3-pointer by JP Pegues with 2.4 seconds left. Then came 16-seed Fairleigh Dickinson's win over Purdue as the 22 1/2-point underdog stifled 7-4 center Zach Edey to advance and join UMBC in the record books.

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All that happened before the Razorbacks and shirtless coach Eric Musselman celebrated their win over the Jayhawks.

GAMES TO WATCH

No. 4 seed Connecticut (27-8) vs. No. 8 seed Arkansas (22-13), Thursday, 7:15 p.m. ET (CBS)

The Huskies are returning to the Sweet 16 for the first time in nine years, and hoping to avoid being the next victim of Arkansas, which ousted defending champion Kansas. UConn outclassed Saint Mary's 70-55 behind 24 points by Adama Sanogo and timely 3-point shooting.

No. 2 Kansas State (25-9) vs. No. 7 Michigan State (21-12), Thursday, 6:30 p.m. ET (TBS)

Tom Izzo is taking Michigan State to the Sweet 16 for the 15th time and first in four years after a 69-60 victory against No. 2 seed Marquette. The victory was the 16th for Izzo in the tournament against a higher seed, breaking the record he shared with recently retired Syracuse coach Jim Boeheim. At Madison Square Garden, the Spartans will face a Kansas State team that was picked to finish last in the Big 12 with a remade roster and first-year coach in Jerome Tang. The Wildcats outlasted Kentucky 75-69 behind 27 points by Markquis Nowell.

No. 5 seed San Diego State (29-6) vs. No. 1 seed Alabama (31-5), Friday, 6:30 p.m. ET (TBS)

The Aztecs are heading to the Sweet 16 for the first time since 2004 and have won 11 of their last 13. Balanced scoring carried them to a second-round victory against Furman and they'll need more of the same against the Crimson Tide, who handily dispatched Maryland in the second round. All-America freshman Brandon Miller, who is nursing an injury, had 19 after going scoreless in the first round.

No. 3 seed Xavier (27-9) vs. No. 2 seed Texas (28-8), Friday, 9:45 p.m. ET (CBS)

The Musketeers are heading to the Sweet 16 for the first time since 2017 and will face a Longhorns team that hasn't been there in 15 years. Xavier put on a clinic on unselfishness in the first half of its 84-73 victory against Pittsburgh, totaling 17 assists on 19 made field goals. The Longhorns made just one 3-pointer in 13 tries in their 71-66 victory against Penn State, but Dylan Disu had season-high 28-point performance.

BRAGGING RIGHTS

The SEC and Big Ten led the way by placing eight teams each in the 68-team field. Conference USA (Florida Atlantic) and the Ivy League (Princeton) each got one team into the tournament and both are still alive. The rest of the leagues can't say that. The records through two rounds:

ACC (5 teams made tourney): 5-4. One team left (Miami). American Athletic (2): 2-1. One team left (Houston). Big 12 (7): 7-5. Two teams left (Kansas State, Texas). Big East (5): 7-2. Three teams left (Creighton, UConn, Xavier). Big Ten (8): 6-7. One team left (Michigan State). Mountain West (4): 2-3. One team left (San Diego State). Pac-12 (4): 3-3. One team left (UCLA). SEC (8): 9-5. Three teams left (Alabama, Arkansas, Tennessee). West Coast (2): 3-1. One team left (Gonzaga).

GO DEEPER

Gun violence has cost lives and disrupted college sports all season, touching some of the top programs in college basketball, including Alabama. Coaches have been thrust into uncertain and unwelcome roles in trying to navigate the topic — as well as the fallout from the Supreme Court decision to overturn Roe vs. Wade.

On a lighter note, if you feel you know March Madness pretty well, try this 25-question trivia quiz put together by AP.

PLAYERS TO WATCH

The NCAA Tournament is filled with great players and the AP All-America team is a good place to get familiar with the names. It's also an event where guys you've never heard of can take a star turn. Guard play is always going to be important (see: Baylor, 2021 title winner) and there are some NBA prospects in the mix.

Bet on this, too: Some player — maybe more than one — will have a chance to join the mustachioed Doug Edert (remember Saint Peter's inspiring run last year?) and find a way to cash in on their celebrity.

HOW TO WATCH

Every game of the men's tournament will be aired — here is a schedule — either on CBS, TBS, TNT or

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TruTV and their digital platforms. CBS, which also has a handy schedule that includes announcing teams, will handle the Final Four and national title game this year.

The NCAA is streaming games via its March Madness Live option and CBS games are being streamed on Paramount+. Fans of longtime play-by-play announcer Jim Nantz should soak up every moment: It's his final NCAA Tournament.

BETTING GUIDE

Who's going to win the national championship? The betting favorites to reach the Final Four are (in order, as of March 19): Alabama, Houston, UConn, UCLA, Gonzaga and Texas, according to FanDuel Sportsbook.

MARCH MADNESS CALENDAR

Sweet 16 weekend will see games in New York City (East Region), Las Vegas (West), Kansas City, Missouri (Midwest), and Louisville, Kentucky (South).

Where is the Final Four? In Houston, on April 1, with the championship game on April 3. Basketball aficionados, take note: The women's NCAA Tournament will hold its Final Four in Dallas, a four-hour drive up the road from Houston.

Can't get enough March Madness? Well, there is talk about expanding the tournament despite a host of challenges. Enjoy the 68-team version for now!

China's Xi meeting Putin in boost for isolated Russia leader

By EMILY WANG FUJIYAMA and JOE McDONALD Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — Chinese leader Xi Jinping is due to meet with Vladimir Putin in a political boost for the isolated Russian president after the International Criminal Court charged him with war crimes in Ukraine.

Xi's government gave no details of what the Chinese leader hoped to accomplish. Xi and Putin declared they had a "no-limits friendship" before the February 2022 attack on Ukraine, but China has tried to portray itself as neutral. Beijing called for a cease-fire last month, but Washington said that would ratify the Kremlin's battlefield gains.

The Chinese government said Xi would visit Moscow from Monday to Wednesday but gave no indication whether he had left. The Russian government said Xi was due to arrive at midday and meet later with Putin.

Ahead of the meeting, China's foreign ministry called on the ICC to "respect the jurisdictional immunity" of a head of state and "avoid politicization and double standards."

China looks to Russia as a source of oil and gas for its energy-hungry economy and as a partner in opposing what both see as American domination of global affairs.

The meeting gives Putin and Xi a chance to show they have "powerful partners" at a time of strained relations with Washington, said Joseph Torigian, an expert in Chinese-Russian relations at American University in Washington.

"China can signal that it could even do more to help Russia, and that if relations with the United States continue to deteriorate, they could do a lot more to enable Russia and help Russia in its war against Ukraine," Torigian said.

Beijing's relations with Washington, Europe and its neighbors are strained by disputes over technology, security, human rights and the ruling Communist Party's treatment of Hong Kong and Muslim minorities.

Some commentators draw a parallel between Russia's claims to Ukrainian territory and Beijing's claim to Taiwan. The Communist Party says the self-ruled island democracy, which split with China in 1949 after a civil war, is obliged to unite with the mainland, by force if necessary. Xi's government has been stepping up efforts to intimidate the island by flying fighter jets nearby and firing missiles into the sea.

China has stepped up purchases of Russian oil and gas, helping to top up the Kremlin's revenue in the face of Western sanctions. But it has avoided doing anything visible that crosses the red lines laid down by Washington and European governments in regard to financial sanctions and the provision of military aid.

This week's meeting follows the ICC announcement Friday of charges that Putin is personally responsible for the abductions of thousands of children from Ukraine. Governments that recognize the court's jurisdiction would be obligated to arrest Putin if he visits.

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Putin has yet to comment on the announcement, but the Kremlin rejected the move as “outrageous and unacceptable.”

In a show of defiance, Putin visited Crimea and the occupied Ukrainian port city of Mariupol to mark the ninth anniversary of Russia’s seizure of the Crimean peninsula from Ukraine. Russian news reports showed him chatting with Mariupol residents and visiting an art school and a children’s center in Sevastopol in Crimea.

The ICC should “uphold an objective and impartial stance, respect the jurisdictional immunity enjoyed by the head of state in accordance” and “avoid politicization and double standards,” said Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin.

“China will uphold its objective and fair position on the Ukrainian crisis and play a constructive role in promoting peace talks,” Wang said.

Xi said in an article published Monday in the Russian newspaper Russian Gazette that China has “actively promoted peace talks” but announced no initiatives.

“My upcoming visit to Russia will be a journey of friendship, cooperation and peace,” Xi wrote, according to text released by the official Xinhua News Agency.

“A reasonable way to resolve the crisis” can be found if “all parties embrace the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security,” Xi wrote.

The trip follows the surprise announcement of a diplomatic thaw between Iran and Saudi Arabia after a meeting in Beijing, a propaganda coup for Xi’s government.

Xi wants to be seen as a global statesman who is “playing a constructive role” by talking about peace but is unlikely to press Putin to end the war, said Torigian. He said Beijing worries about possible Russian battlefield losses but doesn’t want to be seen to “enable Russia’s aggression.”

“They won’t spend political capital” on pressing Moscow to make peace, “especially if they don’t think it will get them anything,” he said.

Former Taiwan leader Ma Ying-jeou will visit China

By HUIZHONG WU Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — Former Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou will visit China next week in what a spokesman called a bid to ease tensions between the self-ruled island and the mainland.

Ma presided over a period of warm ties with Beijing, but left office under a cloud after a trade deal with the mainland failed to win approval amid the island’s largest protests since the 1990s. Although the former president is visiting in a private capacity, his stature as a former leader gives the trip political overtones.

Ma’s proposed visit comes as China’s People Liberation Army sends fighter jets toward Taiwan on a near daily basis, and as official communications between the two governments have broken off. China’s ruling government claims Taiwan is part of its territory, but Taiwan’s governing Democratic Progressive Party says it’s already a sovereign state that is not part of China.

Ma, a member of the opposition Nationalist Party (Kuomintang), will lead a delegation of academics and students as well as his former presidential staffers from March 27 to April 7, his office said Sunday.

The office of President Tsai Ing-wen said Ma had notified her of his plans on Monday. The president’s office said it “hoped Ma, in his role as the former head of state ... can show the value of Taiwan’s democracy and freedom and the position of equality and dignity in cross-strait exchanges.”

Ma will visit Nanjing, Wuhan and Changsha, as well as other cities, Hsiao Hsu-tsen, the director of the Ma Ying-jeou Foundation on Monday, told a news conference in Taipei.

Hsiao also announced that Ma would bring college students from Taiwan to meet with colleagues from Shanghai’s Fudan University and Changsha’s Hunan University.

“He strongly believes, as both sides of the (Taiwan) Strait have entered this frozen situation in recent years, allowing young people to have an exchange will help reduce tensions,” Hsiao said. “I think no matter how many weapons we buy, it’s not as good as having young people from both sides understand each other, and deepen their exchange.”

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Ma will not go to Beijing, Hsiao said. The trip is also a chance for him to honor his ancestors, he added, ahead of Tomb Sweeping Day on April 5. During the festival, which is celebrated in Taiwan and China, among other countries, families pay a visit to ancestral graves to remember the deceased and to maintain the burial grounds.

Ma's trip was also confirmed by China's Taiwan Affairs Office.

Any results are likely to be symbolic, and will mostly benefit China, said Hoo Tiang Boon, a professor at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore who studies Chinese foreign policy. "Then they can then show they are not against Taiwan, they are not against the Taiwanese people," he said. "It's the DPP and what they deem as separatists causing provocations in cross-strait relations."

Hoo added that he didn't think it was likely the trip would influence Taiwan's presidential elections next year.

Other experts agreed that it was unlikely to resolve any major issues, but it could still prove helpful.

Ma's visit follows Andrew Hsia, vice chairman of the Kuomintang, who went on a 10-day tour of China in February and met with the head of the Taiwan Affairs Office.

Members of the Kuomintang regularly have exchanges with China. Taipei Mayor Chiang Wang-an, who belongs to the Kuomintang, had hosted Shanghai city officials in February as well, and discussed exchanges in culture, sports and tourism.

"He's not really representing the government to go and negotiate, I think he just wants to transmit the idea of peaceful exchange," said Kao-cheng Wang, a professor at the Graduate Institute of International Affairs and Strategic Studies at Tamkang University in Taiwan, referring to Ma's plan to bring students. "This will be helpful to cross-strait relations and future development."

During Ma's terms in office, Taiwan and China increased contacts. Ma negotiated a trade pact with Beijing in 2010 and Chinese tourists flocked to Taiwan.

But as both sides opened their borders to each other, concerns grew that Taiwan was falling inescapably into Beijing's orbit, eventually leading to protests over a proposed trade deal with Beijing in 2014. The protests, known as the Sunflower Movement, sparked a rally that drew more than 200,000 people and a 24-day occupation of Taiwan's parliament by students.

Ma met with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Singapore in 2015, while he was still in office. The meeting was the first between the leaders of the two sides since Taiwan split from mainland China in 1949 during the Chinese civil war, but was considered more symbolic than substantive.

In 2016, the independence-leaning Democratic Progressive Party won national elections and Beijing cut off contact with Taiwan's government, citing Tsai's refusal to endorse the idea that Taiwan and China are one country.

UN science report to provide stark climate warning

By FRANK JORDANS and SETH BORENSTEIN Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — A major new United Nations report being released Monday is expected to provide a sobering reminder that time is running out if humanity wants to avoid passing a dangerous global warming threshold.

The report by hundreds of the world's top scientists is the capstone on a series that summarizes the research on global warming compiled since the Paris climate accord was agreed in 2015.

It was approved by countries at the end of a week-long meeting of the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report in the Swiss town of Interlaken, meaning governments have accepted its findings as authoritative advice on which to base their actions.

At the start of the meeting U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned delegates that the planet is "nearing the point of no return" and they risk missing the internationally agreed limit of 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit) of global warming since pre-industrial times.

That's because global emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases keep increasing — mainly due to the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation and intensive agriculture — when in fact they need to

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decline quickly.

Governments agreed in Paris almost eight years ago to try to limit temperature rise to 1.5 C or at least keep it well below 2 C (3.6 F). Since then scientists have increasingly argued that any warming beyond the lower threshold would put humanity at dire risk.

Average global temperatures have already increased by 1.1 degrees Celsius (2 degrees Fahrenheit) since the 19th century, but Guterres insisted last week that the 1.5 C target limit remains possible "with rapid and deep emissions reductions across all sectors of the global economy."

Monday's report comes after the IPCC made clear two years ago that climate change is clearly caused by human activity and refined its predictions for a range of possible scenarios depending on how much greenhouse gas continues to be released.

The following year it published a report concluding that the impacts of global warming are already being felt and nearly half the world's population are "highly vulnerable to climate change." Two months later it laid out what needs to be done to reduce the harm from warming that's already inevitable and prevent a further dangerous rise in temperatures; the sharp drop in cost of solar and wind power would make that easier, it noted.

Three further special reports by the IPCC focused on the oceans, land and 1.5-degree target. The next round of reports won't be published until the second half of this decade, by when experts say it could be too late to take further measures allowing that ambitious goal to still be met.

Governments agreed at last year's climate summit in Egypt to create a fund to help pay for the damage that a warming planet is inflicting on vulnerable countries, but failed to commit to new measures for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The new synthesis report published Monday will play a pivotal role when governments gather in Dubai in December for this year's U.N. climate talks. The meeting will be the first to take stock of global efforts to cut emissions since the Paris deal, and hear calls from poorer nations seeking more aid.

Guterres, the U.N. chief, recently argued that fossil fuel companies should hand over some of their vast profits to help victims of climate change.

Nowell's huge 2nd half leads Kansas State past Kentucky

By The Associated Press undefined

GREENSBORO, N.C. (AP) — Markquis Nowell scored 23 of his 27 points after halftime, and Kansas State overcame a horrid start from outside by hitting a couple of clutch 3-pointers and topping Kentucky 75-69 in Sunday's second round of the NCAA Tournament.

Third-seeded Kansas State (25-9) heads to the Sweet 16 for the first time since 2018, where it will play Michigan State in the East Region semifinals at Madison Square Garden in New York.

Ismael Massoud buried a 3 from the right wing at the 2:21 mark that gave Kansas State the lead for good. Keyontae Johnson followed with another 3 with 1:23 left to put Kansas State ahead by five.

The 5-foot-8 Nowell, a third-team Associated Press All-American, played a fearless floor game while making 7 of 14 shots and 10 of 11 free throws.

Oscar Tshiebwe had 25 points and 18 rebounds for sixth-seeded Kentucky (22-12), which shot 55% after halftime and led by eight early in the second half.

MICHIGAN STATE 69, MARQUETTE 60

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Tyson Walker scored 23 points and No. 7 seed Michigan State beat second-seeded Marquette, sending coach Tom Izzo's squad back to the Sweet 16 for the first time in four years.

Joey Hauser — a Marquette transfer — had 14 points and A.J. Hoggard had as 13 Michigan State (21-12) took over in the last three minutes. The Spartans advanced to play third-seeded Kansas State.

Izzo, the 68-year-old Hall of Fame coach, reached his 15th regional semifinal and won his record 16th March Madness game with a lower-seeded team — one more than Syracuse's Jim Boeheim, who retired after this season.

This one was particularly meaningful. Izzo became the face of a grieving school where three students

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were killed in a campus shooting on Feb. 13.

Olivier-Maxence Prosper led Marquette (29-7) with 16 points and Kam Jones had 14 points, including three 3-pointers, for the Big East champions.

FLORIDA ATLANTIC 78, FAIRLEIGH DICKINSON 70

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Johnell Davis had 29 points, 12 rebounds, five assists and five steals, and Florida Atlantic ended 16th-seeded Fairleigh Dickinson's magical March.

The ninth-seeded Owls (33-3) needed everything they had to put away the Knights (21-16), the nation's smallest team and a winner Friday night over Purdue, the second 16-over-1 upset in tournament history.

FAU will play Tennessee in the East Region semifinals on Thursday at Madison Square Garden in New York.

Demetre Roberts scored 20 points and Sean Moore had 14 for FDU, which didn't even win the Northeast Conference tournament before becoming an NCAA team that won't soon be forgotten.

Alijah Martin added 14 points for FAU, which finally took control late in the second half.

MIDWEST REGION

XAVIER 84, PITTSBURGH 73

GREENSBORO, N.C. (AP) — Jack Nunge scored 18 points, Adam Kunkel added 15 on five first-half 3-pointers, and No. 3 seed Xavier beat 11th-seeded Pittsburgh to reach its first Sweet 16 since 2017.

Colby Jones had 10 points, 14 rebounds and seven assists, and Souley Boum and Jerome Hunter each chipped in with 14 points as all five Xavier starters scored in double digits.

Xavier had 17 assists on 19 baskets in the first half to build a 48-34 lead at the break. The Musketeers finished with 22 assists.

Xavier (27-9) moves on to play No. 2 seed Texas on Friday in the Midwest Region semifinals in Kansas City, Missouri.

Blake Hinson scored 18 points and Jamarius Burton had 16 for Pitt (24-12).

MIAMI 85, INDIANA 69

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — Isaiah Wong and Jordan Miller led a decisive second-half spurt for Miami, which beat Indiana to reach its second straight Sweet 16.

Wong, the Atlantic Coast Conference player of the year who was limited to five points in a first-round win over Drake, had 27 points and eight rebounds for coach Jim Larrañaga's fifth-seeded Hurricanes (27-7), the only ACC team left in March Madness.

Miller scored 19 points and Indianapolis native Nijel Pack had 10 of his 12 points in the first half as Miami got off to a fast start, led most of the game and ended fourth-seeded Indiana's hopes of a sixth national title.

Miami will face top-seeded Houston in the Midwest Region semifinals in Kansas City, Missouri, on Friday.

All-American Trayce Jackson-Davis had 23 points and eight rebounds for the Hoosiers (23-12), who have not been to the Sweet 16 since 2016. Freshman Jalen Hood-Schifino added 19 points and Race Thompson had 11.

WEST REGION

UCONN 70, SAINT MARY'S 55

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — Adama Sanogo scored 24 points and Jordan Hawkins delivered from the 3-point line in the second half as UConn pulled away from Saint Mary's to reach the Sweet 16 for the first time in nine years.

No. 4 seed UConn (27-8) advanced to the West Region semifinals in Las Vegas on Thursday. Next up is eighth-seeded Arkansas, which knocked off No. 1 seed Kansas.

Sanogo followed up his 28-point game in the Huskies' NCAA tourney opener against Iona with another powerful and efficient performance in the paint. The 245-pound junior was 11 for 16 from the floor and grabbed eight rebounds, dominating a big-man matchup with Mitchell Saxen (six points, three rebounds and four fouls).

Saint Mary's (27-8) of the West Coast Conference failed to get out of the first weekend of the tournament for the second straight season as a No. 5 seed.

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Aidan Mahaney and Logan Johnson each scored nine points for the Gaels, who played the final 25 minutes without third-leading scorer Alex Ducas. The senior left with a back injury.

GONZAGA 84, TCU 81

DENVER (AP) — Drew Timme extended his one-of-a-kind college career by at least one more game, finishing with 28 points and eight rebounds to help third-seeded Gonzaga rally past TCU and make its eighth straight Sweet 16.

Timme made his first 3-pointer since December — and only his third of the season — as part of a 13-1 run that helped the Zags (30-5) take a seven-point lead with just under nine minutes left after trailing most of the night.

Next stop for the 6-foot-10 senior and his social media-friendly mustache — Las Vegas for the West Region semifinals and a meeting with UCLA on Thursday.

Mike Miles Jr. finished with 24 points and four assists in his second straight electric game for the sixth-seeded Horned Frogs (22-13), who were trying to win two games in the same tournament for the first time in program history.

SOUTH REGION

CREIGHTON 85, BAYLOR 76

DENVER (AP) — Ryan Nembhard scored a career-high 30 points and No. 6 seed Creighton found its shooting touch to beat third-seeded Baylor and earn a spot in the Sweet 16 for the second time in three seasons.

With Baylor heavily focused on containing big man Ryan Kalkbrenner, Nembhard and the Bluejays went to work from outside. They shot 45.8% from 3-point range after a 3-for-20 showing in a first-round win over North Carolina State. They also went 22 of 22 from the free throw line, including 10 for 10 from Nembhard.

The Bluejays (23-12) will meet 15th-seeded Princeton in Louisville, Kentucky, on Friday in the South Region semifinals in Louisville, Kentucky.

LJ Cryer finished with 30 points for Baylor (23-11), which lost in the second round for the second consecutive year after winning the championship in 2021. Big 12 freshman of the year Keyonte George was held to seven points, well below his average of 15.6.

US routs Cuba 14-2 to reach World Baseball Classic final

By RONALD BLUM AP Baseball Writer

MIAMI (AP) — Trea Turner, Paul Goldschmidt and an unrelenting U.S. lineup kept putting crooked numbers on the scoreboard, a dynamic display of the huge gap between an American team of major leaguers and Cubans struggling on the world stage as top players have left the island nation.

Turner homered twice to give him a tournament-leading four, driving in four runs to lead the U.S. to a 14-2 rout Sunday night and advance the defending champion Americans to the World Baseball Classic final.

Goldschmidt also homered and had four RBIs and Cedric Mullins went deep in a game interrupted three times by fans running on the field to display protest signs.

"The team kind of represents the government over there, and people aren't too happy about it," U.S. manager Mark DeRosa said.

The U.S. plays Japan or Mexico in Tuesday night's championship, trying to join the Samurai Warriors as the only nations to win the title twice.

"I think it took us a little bit of time, but now we kind of found our stride a little bit," Turner said.

Turner has a tournament-leading 10 RBIs. He followed his go-ahead, eighth-inning grand slam a night earlier against Venezuela with a solo homer in the second inning off Roenis Elias (0-1) and a three-run drive in the sixth against Elian Leyva.

"I kept saying every time he went deep, who is the idiot that's hitting him ninth?" DeRosa said.

Cuba went ahead when its first four batters reached off Adam Wainwright (2-0) without getting a ball out of the infield. After forcing in a run with a walk to Alfredo Despaigne, the 41-year-old right-hander recovered to strand the bases loaded.

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"I put myself in that situation in the first place by making horrible PFP plays — or not making PFP plays," Wainwright said in a reference to pitchers' fielding practice and two grounders he failed to come up with.

American batters had 14 hits, including eight for extra bases, and seven walks as they scored in seven of eight innings — five with multiple runs. Goldschmidt hit a go-ahead, two-run homer in the first on a 112 mph rocket high over the left-field wall. He added a two-run single in the fifth.

"For me that was one of my favorite home runs I've ever hit in my entire life," Goldschmidt said.

St. Louis third baseman Nolan Arenado left after he was hit on his right hand by a pitch in the fifth inning, briefly raising another injury concern before X-rays came back as negative. Mets closer Edwin Díaz sustained a season-ending knee injury during the celebration that followed Puerto Rico's win on Wednesday and Houston second baseman Jose Altuve broke a thumb when hit by a pitch while playing for Venezuela on Saturday.

Fans in the sellout crowd of 35,779 at loanDepot Park sounded evenly split between the U.S. and Cuba. Several hundred people gathered before the game outside the ballpark in Miami's Little Havana section to protest the presence of the Cuban team, whose country has been under communist rule since 1959.

Play was briefly interrupted in the sixth, seventh and eighth innings when fans ran onto the field. The first held a banner that read "Libertad Para Los Presos Cubanos del 11 de Julio (Freedom for the Cuban Prisoners of July 11)" referring to the date of 2021 demonstrations.

"There were provocations, but we never paid attention to it," Cuba manager Armando Johnson said.

Cuban fans roared in the early going when their team's first four batters strung together three infield hits and a bases-loaded walk. Wainwright allowed one run and five hits in four innings. Cardinals teammate Miles Mikolas followed with four innings and Aaron Loup finished.

An Olympic gold medalist in 1992, 1996 and 2004, Cuba's national team has faltered as many top players left for MLB. Cuba failed to qualify for the 2020 Tokyo Games.

Cuba this year is for the first using some players under contract to MLB clubs, including Chicago White Sox Gold Glove centerfielder Luis Robert and third baseman Yoán Moncada — who were booed. But many Cuban big leaguers were absent.

"We would like for the other players to join," Johnson said. "They should think about it and return to Cuba."

SECOND GUESSED

DeRosa on what he did after Saturday night's come-from-behind quarterfinal win over Venezuela.

"I was reading how horrible a manager I was on social media first," he said.

OTHER SIDE OF THE BRACKET

In the other semifinal, Japan starts 21-year-old sensation Roki Sasaki against Mexico and the Los Angeles Angels' Patrick Sandoval on Monday night.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Moncada left after the third baseman collided in the sixth inning with left fielder Roel Santos, who caught Kyle Schwarber's fly. Moncada was hit on the ribs but is OK, Johnson said.

UP NEXT

Arizona RHP Merrill Kelly is likely to start the final. ____

AP MLB: <https://apnews.com/hub/mlb> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Gloria Dea, 1st magician on Las Vegas Strip, dies at age 100

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Gloria Dea, touted as the first magician to perform on what would become the Las Vegas Strip in the early 1940s, has died. She was 100.

Dea died Saturday at her Las Vegas residence, said LaNae Jenkins, the director of clinical services for Valley Hospice, who was one of Dea's caretakers. A memorial is being planned.

Dea also appeared in several movies in the 1940s and '50s, including "King of the Congo," starring Buster Crabbe, in 1952.

Dea moved from California to Las Vegas in 1980. Famed magician David Copperfield befriended her in her later years, according to the Las Vegas Review-Journal.

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"Gloria was amazing. She was charming funny and engaging," Copperfield told the newspaper. "And in Vegas, as a young magician, she started it all. It was an honor to know her."

Dea was 19 when she performed at El Rancho Vegas on May 14, 1941.

Her show at the Roundup Room is the first recorded appearance by a magician in Las Vegas, the Review-Journal reported Sunday.

"There was no Strip, really, in those days," Dea told the newspaper last August when she turned 100. "We had the Last Frontier and the El Rancho Vegas. They had just started building the Flamingo."

Dea performed magic that night and more.

"I also danced. I did the rumba because it was difficult to keep setting up all my magic stuff," Dea said. After relocating to California, Dea appeared in several movies including "Mexicana" in 1945 and "Plan 9 From Outer Space" in 1957.

"I was in the Saturday matinees, for the kids," she said. "'Plan 9 From Outer Space' was the worst movie of all time. ... I had fun making it though."

But that marked the end of Dea's entertainment career. She sold insurance and then new and used cars for a dealership in the San Fernando Valley, becoming a top sales rep.

According to the Review-Journal, Dea was an only child and did not have any immediate family. Her husband Sam Anzalone, a former California car sales executive, died in January 2022.

Dea was scheduled to be inducted into the UNLV College of Fine Arts Hall of Fame on Tuesday night.

Those plans will go forward as planned; Dea will be inducted by Copperfield in a presentation before the full program.

Trump silent on abortion as 2024 campaign pushes forward

By STEVE PEOPLES AP National Political Writer

DAVENPORT, Iowa (AP) — No elected Republican has done more to restrict abortion rights in the U.S. than Donald Trump.

But in the early days of the 2024 presidential contest, no Republican has worked harder to avoid the issue than the former president. Far more than his GOP rivals, Trump is sidestepping the issue just nine months after he and his party celebrated the Supreme Court's decision to strip away women's constitutional right to abortion.

Look no further than Trump's trip to Iowa last week for evidence of his delicate balancing act.

Moments after he stepped off his plane just outside Davenport, Trump repeatedly refused to say whether he would support a federal law restricting abortion in every state, a move that anti-abortion activists are demanding of the GOP's presidential contenders.

"We're looking at a lot of different things," Trump said when asked twice by The Associated Press whether he supports a federal abortion ban.

The former president quickly shifted the conversation to immigration, the economy and "radical-left lunatics." And in the hours that followed, he didn't mention the word "abortion" even once as he chatted with Iowans in a diner, delivered an hourlong speech and took almost a dozen questions from voters.

Trump enters the opening stretch of the GOP primary in a strong position. But he faces a host of challenges in the coming weeks, especially as legal investigations surrounding the former president intensify. In a social media post this weekend, Trump said he expected to be arrested this week as a New York grand jury investigates hush money payments to women who alleged sexual encounters with the former president. Manhattan prosecutors, however, have not been in direct touch with Trump, leaving the timeline of potential charges unclear.

But the ultra-cautious approach on abortion reflects a new political reality for Republicans this presidential season.

Party leaders concede that the GOP's stunning success in persuading Trump's remade Supreme Court to overturn Roe v Wade last June ultimately triggered a fierce backlash that boosted Democrats in November's midterms. And while the 2024 political landscape is far from settled, leaders in both parties acknowledge

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that few issues may be more significant in the election of the next president than abortion.

Meanwhile, abortion access is disappearing across America.

Since the Supreme Court overturned Roe just nine months ago, 24 states have banned abortion outright or are likely to do so, according to the Guttmacher Institute. Other states with Republican-controlled legislatures, including Florida, are moving toward restrictive laws that would ban abortion as soon as six weeks of pregnancy.

The next step, according to anti-abortion leaders already playing a vocal role in the GOP's 2024 presidential primary, is to adopt a federal law that would force abortion restrictions upon every state.

Majorie Dannenfels, who leads the socially conservative organization Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America, is pushing for a law banning abortions nationwide at 15 weeks of gestation — if not sooner. She said she has spoken privately with most of the GOP's prospective field, including Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, and believes they would all embrace such a federal ban.

And while she's generally pleased by her conversations with the 2024 field so far, she has noticed Trump's lack of public commitment to continued abortion restrictions in recent weeks.

"No one gets a pass," Dannenfels said, acknowledging that Roe would have not been overturned without Trump's three Supreme Court appointments. "With Trump, this is his legacy. It's something that I believe he will get right, but he's clearly doing some soul searching right now."

Meanwhile, Trump's rivals in the nascent presidential primary field have not shied away from their aggressive abortion plans as they court primary voters.

In Florida, a DeSantis-backed measure to ban abortion after six weeks of pregnancy — before many women realize they're pregnant — is moving through the Republican-controlled state legislature. Democrats there admit there's nothing they can do to prevent the bill from becoming law, which DeSantis is using to strengthen his conservative bona fides ahead of a formal presidential announcement expected in the coming months.

Former Vice President Mike Pence, another likely 2024 contender who has long promoted religious conservatism, has been one of the GOP's most aggressive anti-abortion voices since the Supreme Court's ruling. On the campaign trail in recent weeks, he highlighted his commitment to go further.

Last month in New Hampshire, a state long known for protecting abortion rights, Pence openly vowed to support a federal abortion ban if elected.

"If I was in the Congress of the United States or in a job at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue, and they put a policy in front of me to limit abortions in the country, I'd certainly support it," Pence said in a radio interview. He added that the issue would likely be decided by each individual state, however.

Nikki Haley, who launched her Republican presidential bid a month ago, also believes the issue will be resolved at the state level, despite her personal wishes.

She discussed the possibility of a 15-week federal ban during a February interview on the "Today" show. In a New Hampshire radio interview earlier this month, she reminded voters that she signed into law a 20-week ban while South Carolina governor.

"I can tell you that if it were up to me, every single state would be pro-life," Haley said. "But I think the people need to decide that."

South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott, another likely Republican 2024 prospect, celebrated the Supreme Court's Roe reversal last summer with his party. Last fall, he headlined a gala for Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America, which is fighting for a federal ban.

Democrats are closely tracking the Republican White House hopefuls, knowing that aggressive anti-abortion rhetoric and policies will likely alienate key groups of voters — especially swing voters in the suburbs — in the 2024 general election.

"Republicans are not going to be able to hide from their extremist anti-abortion rights agendas in the 2024 presidential election," said Alexandra De Luca of American Bridge, a pro-Democrat super PAC. "American Bridge and the Democratic Party will hammer Republican presidential candidates early and often, making it impossible for whoever emerges to walk back their extremist views during the general election."

More than his Republican opponents, Trump seems acutely aware of such political risks.

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Before the 2022 midterms, he tried to persuade some of his preferred candidates to back off hard-line abortion positions — especially those that opposed exceptions in cases of rape, incest or life of the mother.

In distancing himself from aggressive anti-abortion policies, however, Trump opens himself up to a new set of challenges with religious conservatives.

Already, some evangelical leaders have withheld their endorsement. Trump said such moves are “a sign of disloyalty” in an interview with David Brody of the Christian Broadcasting Network. And he accused anti-abortion leaders of failing to do enough to help GOP candidates in the midterms, which hasn’t sat well with some evangelicals.

Bob Vander Plaats, the president of Iowa’s Family Leader, said that abortion remains “a character-defining issue” that helps voters determine whether they can trust candidates or not.

So far, he said, it’s unclear whether evangelicals can trust Trump in 2024.

“While we’re thrilled that he gave us justices to overturn Roe v. Wade, and we’re thrilled he did other things on abortion, frankly I think there’s a big question mark out there,” Vander Plaats said. “Where is he on the sanctity of life? Does he really believe what he says he believes? When he’s pivoting and when he doesn’t want to talk about it and when he throws the pro-life community under the bus, those are all indicators that give us more cause for pause.”

Trump’s campaign pushed back against such concerns.

Campaign spokesman Steven Cheung listed Trump’s “unmatched” record on abortion, highlighting Trump’s Supreme Court nominations, his moves to block taxpayer-funded abortion and his decision to reinstate the “Mexico City” policy that required nongovernmental organizations as a condition of funding not to promote abortion as a family planning method in other countries.

“There has been no bigger advocate for the movement than President Trump,” he said.

North Korea: Latest missile simulated nuclear counterattack

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea said Monday it simulated a nuclear attack on South Korea with a ballistic missile launch over the weekend that was its fifth missile demonstration this month to protest the largest joint military exercises in years between the U.S. and South Korea.

The North’s leader Kim Jong Un instructed his military to hold more drills to sharpen the war readiness of his nuclear forces in the face of “aggression” by his enemies, state media reported.

The South Korean and Japanese militaries detected the short-range missile being launched Sunday into waters off the North’s eastern coast, which reportedly came less than an hour before the U.S. flew long-range B-1B bombers for training with South Korean warplanes. The North characterizes the U.S.-South Korea exercises as a rehearsal to invade, though the allies insist they are defensive in nature. Some experts say the North uses the exercises as a pretext to advance its weapons programs.

Pyongyang’s official Korean Central News Agency said the missile, which flew about 800 kilometers (500 miles), was tipped with a mock nuclear warhead. It described the test as successful, saying that the device detonated as intended 800 meters (yards) above water at a spot that simulated an unspecified “major enemy target,” supposedly reaffirming the reliability of the weapon’s nuclear explosion control devices and warhead detonators.

The report said the launch was the final step of a two-day drill that also involved nuclear command and control exercises and training military units to switch more quickly into nuclear counterattack posture, properly handle nuclear weapons systems and execute attack plans.

The exercise was also a “stronger warning” to the United States and South Korea, who are “undisguised in their explicit attempt to unleash a war” against the North, KCNA said.

Photos published by state media showed Kim walking through a forest with his daughter and senior military officials and a missile the North described as a tactical nuclear weapon system soaring from the woods spewing flames and smoke.

Saying that his enemies are getting “ever more pronounced in their moves for aggression,” Kim laid out unspecified “strategic tasks” for further developing his nuclear forces and improving their war readiness,

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KCNA said. This indicated that the North could up the ante in its weapons demonstrations in coming weeks or months.

Jeon Ha Gyu, spokesperson of South Korea's Defense Ministry, said it's clear North Korea with its ramped-up testing activity is making "considerable progress" in nuclear weapons technology. He did not provide a specific assessment about the North's claim about the successful warhead detonation.

North Korean photos indicated the latest launch was of a solid-fuel missile apparently modeled after Russia's Iskander mobile ballistic system that the North has been testing since 2019. The missiles are built to travel at low altitudes and be maneuverable in flight, which theoretically improve their chances of evading South Korean missile defenses.

While these missiles have been mostly fired from wheeled vehicles, North Korea has also tested them or their variants from railcars, a submarine and a platform inside a reservoir. Photos of the latest test suggested the missile was possibly fired from a silo dug into the ground, highlighting the North's efforts to diversify its launch options and make it harder for opponents to identify and counter them.

South Korea's military said the launch took place at a mountainous northwestern region near Tongchangri, which hosts a site where the North conducted long-range rocket and satellite launches in previous years.

North Korea likely has dozens of nuclear warheads, but there are differing assessments on how far the North has advanced in miniaturizing and engineering those weapons so that they could fit on the newer weapons it tested in recent years.

While the North after six nuclear tests may be able to place simple nuclear warheads on some of its older systems, like Scuds or Rodong missiles, it will likely require further technology upgrades and nuclear tests to build warheads that can be installed on its more advanced tactical systems, according to Lee Choon Geun, an honorary research fellow at South Korea's Science and Technology Policy Institute.

Sunday's short-range launch was the North's fifth missile event this month and the third since the U.S. and South Korean militaries began joint exercises on March 13. The allies' drills, which are to continue through Thursday, include computer simulations and their biggest springtime field exercise since 2018.

The North so far in 2023 has fired around 20 missiles over nine different launch events. They included short-range missiles fired from land, cruise missiles launched from a submarine, and two different inter-continental ballistic missiles fired an airport near Pyongyang as it tries to demonstrate a dual ability to conduct nuclear attacks on South Korea and the U.S. mainland.

The latest ICBM test last Thursday preceded a summit between South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, who agreed to resume security dialogues and take other steps to improve their oft-strained relations in the face of North Korean threats.

North Korea already is coming off a record year in testing activity, with more than 70 missiles fired in 2022, as Kim accelerates his weapons development aimed at forcing the United States to accept the idea of the North as a nuclear power and negotiating badly needed sanctions relief from a position of strength.

In response to the most recent ICBM launch, the U.N. Security Council scheduled an emergency open meeting Monday morning at the request of the United States, United Kingdom, Albania, Ecuador, France and Malta. Security Council resolutions have long banned North Korean ballistic missile activity, but permanent council members Russia and China have thwarted punishment or further sanctions in recent years.

The U.N. Security Council held an informal meeting Friday at which the U.S., its allies and human rights experts shone a spotlight on what they described as the dire rights situation in North Korea. China and Russia denounced the meeting as a politicized move.

North Korea's U.N. Mission called the meeting about "our non-existent 'human rights issue'" unlawful. It also said the U.S. held Friday's meeting "while staging the aggressive joint military exercise which poses a grave threat to our national security."

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Sandler receives Mark Twain Prize, praise from comic pals

By ASHRAF KHALIL Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Adam Sandler placed his hand on the bronze bust of Mark Twain and speculated that it “one day might be the weapon used to bludgeon me in my sleep.”

A host of comedic and entertainment royalty gathered at Washington’s Kennedy Center as Sandler was presented with the Mark Twain Prize for American Humor.

Presenters including Drew Barrymore, Conan O’Brien, Chris Rock, Jennifer Aniston, Steve Buscemi, Dana Carvey, and Luis Guzmán gave testimonials to Sandler’s creative longevity, while poking occasional fun at his uneven movie output and tendency to cast all his friends in his movies.

Sandler’s longtime writing and production partner Tim Herlihy joked that the pair were responsible for “31 motion pictures with a combined Rotten Tomatoes score of 59.”

Buscemi, known largely for dramatic and often violent roles, portrayed a string of comedic characters in Sandler movies.

“He takes his comedy very seriously. I laugh hard at everything I do with him,” he said.

Buscemi also singled out Sandler’s musical comedy, including “The Chanukah Song,” which became a multiplatinum hit. “His comedy songs alone deserve this reward,” he said.

Judd Apatow, Sandler’s roommate during their early days in Los Angeles, recalled a young Sandler’s boundless confidence and obvious talent.

“The moment you met him, you knew Adam was going to be a big star,” Apatow said. “And so did Adam.”

To highlight Sandler’s seemingly limitless comedic energy, Apatow played an old video he recorded of a young Sandler prank-calling a local deli in his spare time to try out different comedic voices.

At the end of the night, Sandler paid tribute to his parents and siblings for arming him with “that weird irrational confidence thing that I guess I still have”

Sandler, 56, first came to national attention as a cast member on “Saturday Night Live.” After being fired from the cast following a five-year stint, Sandler launched a wildly successful movie career that has spanned more than 30 films, grossing over \$3 billion worldwide.

Sandler’s top hits include “Happy Gilmore,” “The Wedding Singer” and “You Don’t Mess with the Zohan.” Although primarily known for slapstick comedy and overgrown man-child characters, he has excelled in multiple dramatic roles in films such as “Punch Drunk Love” and “Uncut Gems.”

Guzman, who co-starred in “Punch Drunk Love,” admitted he originally thought Sandler was “out of his depth” in a dramatic role scripted by auteur director Paul Thomas Anderson. But he came away impressed and praised Sandler’s “total commitment to something that was so far out of his element.”

Other comedians who received the lifetime achievement award include inaugural honoree Richard Pryor in 1998, Whoopi Goldberg, Bob Newhart, Carol Burnett and Dave Chapelle. Bill Cosby, the 2009 recipient, saw his Mark Twain Prize rescinded in 2019 amid multiple allegations of sexual assault.

The comedy institution “SNL” has provided more than its share of the 24 Mark Twain recipients. Sandler is the seventh cast member to receive the prize, joining Bill Murray, Tina Fey, Will Farrell, Billy Crystal, Eddie Murphy, Julia Louise-Dreyfus. Show creator and producer Lorne Michaels won in 2004.

The ceremony will be broadcast nationally on CNN on March 26.

Michigan State outlasts Marquette; Izzo back to Sweet 16

By MITCH STACY AP Sports Writer

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Tom Izzo leaned on star guard and native New Yorker Tyson Walker to get Michigan State to Madison Square Garden for the Sweet 16.

Walker, a fourth-year player who grew up in Westbury on Long Island, delivered against Marquette in March Madness on Sunday night, scoring 23 points and punctuating Michigan State’s 69-60 victory with a steal and his first ever collegiate dunk late in the game.

And Walker wants to make sure his 68-year-old, Hall of Fame coach has a quintessential Big Apple experience.

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"It means everything," said Walker, who played two years at Northeastern before transferring to Michigan State. "Just growing up, seeing everything, playing at the Garden. Just to make those shots, look over see my dad, see how excited he was. That means everything. And I just owe Coach some pizza now. And a cab ride."

Joey Hauser — a Marquette transfer — had 14 points and A.J. Hoggard had 13 as seventh-seeded Michigan State (21-12) took over in the last three minutes. The Spartans advanced to the Sweet 16 for the first time in four years and will play third-seeded Kansas State in the East Region semifinals on Thursday.

"I've been in Elite Eight games; I've been in the Final Four — that was as intense and tough a game as I've been in my career," Izzo said. "And a lot of credit goes to Marquette and (coach) Shaka (Smart) and how they played, too."

Izzo reached his 15th regional semifinal and won his record 16th March Madness game with a lower-seeded team — one more than Syracuse's Jim Boeheim, who retired after this season.

This one was particularly meaningful. Izzo became the face of a grieving school where three students were killed in a campus shooting on Feb. 13.

"It's been a long year," an emotional Izzo said in a courtside interview. "I'm just happy for our guys."

Olivier-Maxence Prosper led second-seeded Marquette (29-7) with 16 points and Kam Jones had 14 points, including three 3-pointers, for the Big East champions.

Michigan State led by as many as 12 in the first half, but Ben Gold and Prosper made back-to-back 3-pointers to help the Golden Eagles close within 33-28 at halftime.

Prosper hit two more 3s in the first minute of the second half to give Marquette its first lead of the day. Michigan State grabbed back the lead with an 8-0 run and didn't relinquish it.

Back-to-back baskets in the paint by Hoggard and then Walker, both times as the shot clock expired, gave the Spartans a 60-55 lead with 2:20 left. Mady Sissoko then blocked shots on consecutive Marquette possessions, and Walker had a steal followed by a game-sealing dunk with 39 seconds left.

Marquette's nine-game winning streak ended, concluding a season in which the Golden Eagles exceeded expectations under coach Smart, who has referred to Izzo as a mentor.

Michigan State, meanwhile, finished fourth in the Big Ten but appears to be improving at the right time.

"We've still got some dancing to do," Izzo said. "And we're going to New York. I couldn't be more excited for Tyson and even A.J., being a Philly guy."

"After watching the tournament, it doesn't matter who we play, when we play, where we play, or how, it's going to be a hell of a game. And I'm looking forward to it."

BIG PICTURE

Marquette: Coming off their first Big East Tournament title, the Golden Eagles dominated Vermont in the first round of March Madness, but Michigan State was a much tougher opponent. The Golden Eagles committed 11 of their 16 turnovers in the second half, and those giveaways led to 19 Spartans points.

"I thought (Michigan State) played with great aggressiveness, particularly early in the game and at the very end of the game," Smart said. "And those two stretches were the difference in the outcome of the game."

Michigan State: The Spartans came out of their shooting funk after the halfway point of the second half and pulled away. They made 15 of their 17 free throws after halftime.

KOLEK HURTING

Tyler Kolek, the Big East Player of the Year, injured his thumb when he caught it on the jersey of a Vermont player in the opening round Friday night.

He finished that game with eight points. He wasn't much of a factor against Michigan State, either, scoring seven points, losing six turnovers and committing four fouls.

Kolek insisted the thumb "wasn't an issue at all."

"Just trying to be out there for my team and command the game. And I didn't do that today," he said.

UP NEXT

Michigan State's next opponent, Kansas State, is making its first Sweet 16 appearance since 2018 and

first under coach Jerome Tang.

UBS to buy Credit Suisse for nearly \$3.25B to calm turmoil

By JAMEY KEATEN and KEN SWEET Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — Banking giant UBS is buying troubled rival Credit Suisse for almost \$3.25 billion, in a deal orchestrated by regulators in an effort to avoid further market-shaking turmoil in the global banking system.

Swiss authorities pushed for UBS to take over its smaller rival after a plan for Credit Suisse to borrow up to 50 billion francs (\$54 billion) failed to reassure investors and the bank's customers. Shares of Credit Suisse and other banks plunged this week after the failure of two banks in the U.S. sparked concerns about other potentially shaky institutions in the global financial system.

Credit Suisse is among the 30 financial institutions known as globally systemically important banks, and authorities worried about the fallout if it were to fail.

The deal was "one of great breadth for the stability of international finance," said Swiss President Alain Berset as he announced it Sunday night. "An uncontrolled collapse of Credit Suisse would lead to incalculable consequences for the country and the international financial system."

Switzerland's executive branch, a seven-member governing body that includes Berset, passed an emergency ordinance allowing the merger to go through without shareholder approval.

Credit Suisse Chairman Axel Lehmann called the sale "a clear turning point."

"It is a historic, sad and very challenging day for Credit Suisse, for Switzerland and for the global financial markets," Lehmann said, adding that the focus is now on the future and in particular on the 50,000 Credit Suisse employees, 17,000 of whom are in Switzerland.

Following news of the Swiss deal, the world's central banks announced coordinated financial moves to stabilize banks in the coming week. This includes daily access to a lending facility for banks looking to borrow U.S. dollars if they need them, a practice which widely used during the 2008 financial crisis. Three months after Lehman Brothers collapsed in September of 2008, such swap lines had been tapped for \$580 billion. Added swap lines were also rolled out during market turmoil in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic in March of 2020.

"Today is one of the most significant days in European banking since 2008, with far-reaching repercussions for the industry," said Max Georgiou, an analyst at Third Bridge. "These events could alter the course of not only European banking but also the wealth management industry more generally."

Colm Kelleher, the UBS chairman, hailed the "enormous opportunities" that emerge from the takeover, and highlighted his bank's "conservative risk culture" — a subtle swipe at Credit Suisse's reputation for more swashbuckling, aggressive gambles in search of bigger returns. He said the combined group would create a wealth manager with over \$5 trillion in total invested assets.

Swiss Finance Minister Karin Keller-Sutter said the council "regrets that the bank, which was once a model institution in Switzerland and part of our strong location, was able to get into this situation at all."

The combination of the two biggest and best-known Swiss banks, each with storied histories dating to the mid-19th century, amounts to a thunderclap for Switzerland's reputation as a global financial center — leaving it on the cusp of having a single national champion in banking.

The deal follows the collapse of two large U.S. banks last week that spurred a frantic, broad response from the U.S. government to prevent any further panic. Still, global financial markets have been on edge since Credit Suisse's share price began plummeting this week.

European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde lauded the "swift action" by Swiss officials, saying they were "instrumental for restoring orderly market conditions and ensuring financial stability."

She said the banks "are in a completely different position from 2008" during the financial crisis, partly because of stricter government regulation.

UBS officials said they plan to sell off parts of Credit Suisse or reduce the bank's size in the coming months and years.

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The Swiss government is providing more than 100 billion francs in aid and financial backstops to make the deal go through.

As part of the deal, approximately 16 billion francs (\$17.3 billion) in Credit Suisse bonds will be wiped out. European bank regulators use a special type of bond designed to provide a capital cushion to banks in times of distress. But these bonds are designed to be wiped out if a bank's capital falls below a certain level, which was triggered as part of this government-brokered deal.

Berset said the Federal Council had already been discussing a long-troubled situation at Credit Suisse since the beginning of the year and held urgent meetings in the last four days amid spiraling concerns about its financial health that caused major swoons in its stock price and raised the specter of the 2007-08 financial crisis.

Investors and banking industry analysts were still digesting the deal, but at least one analyst was sour on the news because it could damage Switzerland's global banking image.

"A country-wide reputation with prudent financial management, sound regulatory oversight, and, frankly, for being somewhat dour and boring regarding investments, has been wiped away," said Octavio Marenzi, CEO of consulting firm Opimas LLC, in an email.

Credit Suisse is designated by the Financial Stability Board, an international body that monitors the global financial system, as one of the world's important banks. This means regulators believe its uncontrolled failure would lead to ripples throughout the financial system not unlike the collapse of Lehman Brothers 15 years ago.

The Credit Suisse parent bank is not part of European Union supervision, but it has entities in several European countries that are. Lagarde reiterated what she said last week after the central bank raised interest rates — that the European banking sector is resilient, with strong financial reserves and plenty of ready cash.

Many of Credit Suisse's problems are unique and do not overlap with the weaknesses that brought down Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank, whose failures led to a significant rescue effort by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. and the Federal Reserve. As a result, their downfall does not necessarily signal the start of a financial crisis similar to what occurred in 2008.

The deal caps a highly volatile week for Credit Suisse, most notably on Wednesday when its shares plunged to a record low after its largest investor, the Saudi National Bank, said it wouldn't invest any more money into the bank to avoid tripping regulations that would kick in if its stake rose about 10%.

On Friday, shares dropped 8% to close at 1.86 francs (\$2) on the Swiss exchange. The stock has seen a long downward slide: It traded at more than 80 francs in 2007.

Its current troubles began after Credit Suisse reported on Tuesday that managers had identified "material weaknesses" in the bank's internal controls on financial reporting as of the end of last year. That fanned fears that Credit Suisse would be the next domino to fall.

While smaller than its Swiss rival UBS, Credit Suisse still wields considerable influence, with \$1.4 trillion assets under management. The firm has significant trading desks around the world, caters to the rich and wealthy through its wealth management business, and is a major advisor for global companies in mergers and acquisitions. Notably, Credit Suisse did not need government assistance in 2008 during the financial crisis, while UBS did.

The Swiss bank has been pushing to raise money from investors and roll out a new strategy to overcome an array of troubles, including bad bets on hedge funds, repeated shake-ups of its top management and a spying scandal involving UBS.

Nowell, late 3s lift Kansas State past Kentucky in NCAAs

By AARON BEARD AP Basketball Writer

GREENSBORO, N.C. (AP) — Markquis Nowell never lost faith, not when Kansas State had hardly anyone left on the roster for a new coach nor when the Wildcats were picked last in the Big 12.

"He always believed," coach Jerome Tang said, "And he helped me believe."

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And that led Kansas State to this decidedly hard-to-believe moment: headed for New York's Madison Square Garden, ticket in hand for the NCAA Tournament's Sweet 16.

Nowell scored 23 of his 27 points after halftime, and Kansas State overcame a horrid start from outside by hitting a couple of clutch 3-pointers while topping Kentucky 75-69 in Sunday's second round.

Tang has gone from having just two players on the roster to having a matching number of NCAA wins — sending the Wildcats (25-9) to their first Sweet 16 since 2018.

"Dudes," Tang said. "We got dudes. That's what it takes. I mean, people get all caught up in the coaching and all of that stuff. It's dudes."

Kansas State faces No. 7 seed Michigan State in the East Region semifinals on Thursday.

Kansas State missed its first 13 3-pointers and sat at 2 for 17 when the outside shots started falling. Nowell buried a step-back 3 against Cason Wallace to pull within 60-59, soon followed by Ismael Massoud from the right wing for a 64-62 edge with 2:21 left.

Keyontae Johnson added another from that side near the Kansas State bench, making it 67-62 with 1:23 left and creating a jolt with the kind of margin that felt massive considering nearly all of the second half had been played within four points.

The 5-foot-8 Nowell, a third-team Associated Press All-American, played a fearless floor game. He was part of two memorable plays before halftime: a behind-the-back transition pass to Johnson for a dunk, and then a look-away alley-oop to Nae'Qwan Tomlin on the baseline to end the half.

He hit three 3s, the first over Kentucky's Oscar Tshiebwe after the 0-for-13 start and another with his left foot on the "March Madness" midcourt logo.

Tshiebwe had 25 points and 18 rebounds for sixth-seeded Kentucky (22-12), which led by eight early in the second half. But the Wildcats never could stretch that lead nor make their own big outside shots (4 for 20).

"Tough way to end," Kentucky coach John Calipari said. "We had some guys really fight like crazy and then had a couple of guys offensively not play their game the way they played all year. But that stuff happens in this tournament."

Kansas State's path isn't nearly so common.

Tang left Baylor after a long stint on Scott Drew's staff to take over a program that last went to the tournament in 2019 and had three straight losing seasons.

Yet after a summer of transfer-portal work, the Wildcats thrived right away. And Tang's bets paid off in a number of ways Sunday.

There was Johnson, who transferred from Florida after collapsing in a game in December 2020 and hadn't played since.

There was Virginia Tech transfer big man David N'Guessan, who played multiple late possessions with his right heel out of his shoe — yet still had the tipout offensive rebound that led to Johnson's 3.

And there was Massoud, who transferred from Wake Forest before Tang's arrival and joined Nowell in sticking around this year. He made his huge 3 about 30 minutes from his first college campus.

"Ish stepped up, Keyontae stepped up, David stepped up," Nowell said. "We all stepped up in those moments and we live for those moments."

For the other set of Wildcats, it marked another earlier-than-hoped-for exit from March Madness.

Tshiebwe had 25 rebounds in the first-round win against Providence for the most in any tournament game since 1977, and the two-time AP All-American was again a force inside. Wallace had 15 of his 21 points after halftime, including multiple times when the freshman used his 6-4 frame against Nowell inside.

But No. 2 scorer Antonio Reeves (14.6 points) managed five points on 1-for-15 shooting, including 1-for-10 on 3s. The only make came with 8 seconds left.

When it was over, KSU players hugged each other at midcourt, with guard Desi Sills — another transfer, fittingly — talking animatedly to nearby cameras as he walked around the court.

Later, after most had left the court, Johnson was still hanging around behind the bench to sign autographs. And Tomlin squeezed in one more pass for high-fives of his own before running off with a triumphant

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phant point to a cross-court pocket of KSU fans.

BIG PICTURE

Kentucky: The past year of wild emotional swings started with a devastating first-round exit at the hands of 15-seed Saint Peter's. Calipari had been pushing his team to play loose and free entering this tournament. Still, it wasn't enough to get Kentucky back to the second weekend for the first time since an Elite Eight run in 2019, ending what Jacob Toppin called "a roller coaster for sure" of a year.

Kansas State: Nowell likes March. He went for 17 points and 14 assists in Friday's first-round win against Montana State. And as Kansas State outscored Kentucky 19-9 down the stretch, Nowell had 11 and went 8 for 8 at the line.

FLAT TIRE

N'Guessan, a 6-9 forward, played 74 seconds with his heel coming out of his right shoe before he was finally able to fix it during a late stoppage.

"I thought the referees were going to do something after like three possessions," N'Guessan said. "I was still wiggling around with one shoe on."

Biden calls Israel's Netanyahu with judicial plan 'concern'

By AAMER MADHANI and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — President Joe Biden spoke Sunday with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to express "concern" over his government's planned overhaul of the country's judicial system that has sparked widespread protests across Israel and to encourage compromise.

The White House said Biden reiterated U.S. concerns about the measure to roll back the judiciary's insulation from the country's political system, in a call a senior administration official described as "candid and constructive." There was no immediate indication that Netanyahu was shying away from the action, after rejecting a compromise last week offered by the country's figurehead president.

The official, who requested anonymity to discuss the leaders' private call, said that Biden spoke to Netanyahu "as a friend of Israel in the hopes that there can be a compromise formula found."

The White House in statement added that Biden "underscored his belief that democratic values have always been, and must remain, a hallmark of the U.S.-Israel relationship, that democratic societies are strengthened by genuine checks and balances, and that fundamental changes should be pursued with the broadest possible base of popular support."

"The President offered support for efforts underway to forge a compromise on proposed judicial reforms consistent with those core principles," the statement said.

Netanyahu told Biden that Israel will "remain, a strong and vibrant democracy," according to the prime minister's office.

Netanyahu said Sunday the legal changes would be carried out responsibly while protecting the basic rights of all Israelis. His government — the country's most right-wing ever — says the overhaul is meant to correct an imbalance that has given the courts too much power and prevented lawmakers from carrying out the voting public's will.

Critics say it will upend Israel's delicate system of checks and balances and slide the country toward authoritarianism. Opponents of the measure have carried out disruptive protests, and has even embroiled the country's military, after more than 700 elite officers from the Air Force, special forces, and Mossad said they would stop volunteering for duty.

The conversation followed a Sunday meeting in Egypt between Israeli and Palestinian officials in which they pledged to take steps to lower tensions ahead of a sensitive holiday season. Administration officials praised the outcome of the summit in the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh. A joint communique said the sides had reaffirmed a commitment to de-escalate and prevent further violence.

Biden in the call "reinforced the need for all sides to take urgent, collaborative steps to enhance security coordination, condemn all acts of terrorism, and maintain the viability of a two-state solution," according to the White House.

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The Israeli and Palestinian delegations met for the second time in less than a month, shepherded by regional allies Egypt and Jordan, as well as the United States, to end a yearlong spasm of violence.

More than 200 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire in the West Bank and east Jerusalem, and more than 40 Israelis or foreigners have been killed in Palestinian attacks during that time. These include pledges to stop unilateral actions, it said. Israel pledged to stop discussion of new settlement construction for four months, and to stop plans to legalize unauthorized settlement outposts for six months.

"The two sides agreed to establish a mechanism to curb and counter violence, incitement and inflammatory states and actions," the communique said. The sides would report on progress at a follow-up meeting in Egypt next month, it added.

The Biden administration remains concerned about a repeat of the nightly clashes and other violent incidents between Palestinians and Israelis in Jerusalem during Ramadan two years ago. Clashes at the Temple Mount in 2021 helped trigger an 11-day war between Israel and Hamas, which rules the Gaza Strip.

Under longstanding arrangements, Jews are allowed to visit the site but not pray there. But in recent years, the number of visitors has grown, with some quietly praying. Such scenes have raised fears among Palestinians that Israel is trying to alter the status quo.

Miami Beach sets spring break curfew after 2 fatal shootings

MIAMI BEACH, Fla. (AP) — Miami Beach officials imposed a curfew beginning Sunday night during spring break after two fatal shootings and rowdy, chaotic crowds that police have had difficulty controlling.

The city said in a news release the curfew would be from 11:59 p.m. Sunday until 6 a.m. Monday, with an additional curfew likely to be put in place Thursday through next Monday, March 27. The curfew mainly affects South Beach, the most popular party location for spring breakers.

The release said the two separate shootings Friday night and early Sunday that left two people dead and "excessively large and unruly crowds" led to the decision. The city commission plans a meeting Monday to discuss potential further restrictions next week.

Miami Beach Mayor Dan Gelber said in a video message posted Sunday that the crowds and presence of numerous firearms has "created a peril that cannot go unchecked" despite massive police presence and many city-sponsored activities meant to keep people busy.

"We don't ask for spring break in our city. We don't want spring break in our city. It's too rowdy, it's too much disorder and it's too difficult to police," Gelber said.

The latest shooting happened about 3:30 a.m. Sunday on Ocean Drive in South Beach, according to Miami Beach police. A male was shot and died later at a hospital, and officers chased down a suspect on foot, police said on Twitter. Their identities were not released, nor were any possible charges.

In the Friday night shooting, one male victim was killed and another seriously injured, sending crowds scrambling in fear from restaurants and clubs into the streets as gunshots rang out. Police detained one person at the scene and found four firearms, but no other details have been made available.

Under the curfew, people must leave businesses before midnight, although hotels can operate later only in service to their guests. The city release said restaurants can stay open only for delivery and the curfew won't apply to residents, people going to and from work, emergency services and hotel guests. Some roads will be closed off and arriving hotel guests may have to show proof of their reservations.

Last year, the city imposed a midnight curfew following two shootings, also on Ocean Drive. The year before that, there were about 1,000 arrests and dozens of guns confiscated during a rowdy spring break that led Miami Beach officials to take steps aimed at calming the situation.

Bidens to host 'Ted Lasso' cast to promote mental health

By ZEKE MILLER and DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden will host the cast of the TV series "Ted Lasso" at the White House on Monday to promote mental health and well-being.

Jason Sudeikis, who plays the title character — an American coaching a soccer team in London — and

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other members of the cast will meet with the Bidens "to discuss the importance of addressing your mental health to promote overall wellbeing," the White House said. The third season of the Emmy-winning, feel-good Apple TV+ series began streaming last week.

A White House official said the Bidens had seen some of the show and are familiar with its "message of positivity, hope, kindness, and empathy." Cast members expected to be in attendance include: Hannah Waddingham, Jeremy Swift, Phil Dunster, Brett Goldstein, Brendan Hunt, Toheeb Jimoh, Cristo Fernandez, Kola Bokinni, Billy Harris, and James Lance.

Biden has previously called on lawmakers in both parties to expand resources to fight the "mental health crisis" in the nation as part of his "unity agenda." His administration has surged funding to bolster the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and expand school-based mental health professionals.

Russia's Putin makes surprise trip to occupied Mariupol

By KARL RITTER Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin visited the occupied port city of Mariupol, his first trip to Ukrainian territory that Moscow illegally annexed in September and a show of defiance after the International Criminal Court issued a warrant for his arrest on war crimes charges.

Putin arrived in Mariupol late Saturday after visiting Crimea, southwest of Mariupol, to mark the ninth anniversary of the Black Sea peninsula's annexation from Ukraine, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Sunday. He was shown chatting with Mariupol residents and visiting an art school and a children's center in Sevastopol, Crimea.

Mariupol became a worldwide symbol of resistance after outgunned and outmanned Ukrainian forces held out in a steel mill there for nearly three months before Moscow finally took control of it in May. Much of the city was pounded to rubble by Russian shelling.

Putin has not commented on the arrest warrant, which deepened his international isolation despite the unlikelihood of him facing trial anytime soon. The Kremlin, which does not recognize the authority of the ICC, has rejected its move as "legally null and void."

The surprise trip also came ahead of a planned visit to Moscow by Chinese President Xi Jinping this week, expected to provide a major diplomatic boost to Putin in his confrontation with the West.

In an essay published Monday in the People's Daily, the newspaper of the Chinese Communist Party's Central Committee, Putin said: "We are grateful for the balanced line (of China) in connection with the events taking place in Ukraine, for understanding their background and true causes. We welcome China's willingness to play a constructive role in resolving the crisis."

China in February released a position paper calling for an end to fighting in Ukraine and for upholding all countries' sovereignty and territorial integrity. It did not address how to resolve Russia's illegal claim to have annexed four regions of Ukraine.

White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby told "Fox News Sunday" that any call for a cease-fire in Ukraine coming out of the Putin-Xi meeting would be unacceptable to the U.S. because it would only "ratify Russian's conquest to date," and give Moscow "time to refit, retrain, re-man and try to plan for a renewed offensive."

Putin arrived in Mariupol by helicopter and then drove himself around the city's "memorial sites," concert hall and coastline, Russian news reports said. The state Rossiya 24 channel on Sunday showed Putin chatting with locals outside what looked like a newly built residential complex, and being shown around one of the apartments.

Following his trip to Mariupol, Putin met with Russian military leaders and troops at a command post in Rostov-on-Don, a southern Russian city some 180 kilometers (about 112 miles) farther east, and conferred with Gen. Valery Gerasimov, who is in charge of the Russian military operations in Ukraine. Peskov said.

Peskov said the trip had been unannounced, and that Putin intended to "inspect the work of the (command) post in its ordinary mode of operation."

Speaking to the state RIA-Novosti agency, Deputy Prime Minister Marat Khusnullin made clear that

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Russia was in Mariupol to stay. He said the government hoped to finish the reconstruction of its blasted downtown by the end of the year.

"People have started to return. When they saw that reconstruction is underway, people started actively returning," Khusnullin told RIA.

Mykhailo Podolyak, chief of staff for Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, heaped scorn on Putin's trip to Mariupol.

"The criminal is always drawn to the crime scene," he said. "While the countries of the civilized world are announcing the arrest of the 'war director' in the event of crossing the border, the organizer of the murders of thousands of Mariupol families came to admire the ruins of the city and mass graves."

When Moscow fully captured the city in May, an estimated 100,000 people remained, out of a prewar population of 450,000. Many were trapped without food, water, heat or electricity. Relentless bombardment left rows of shattered or hollowed-out buildings.

Mariupol's plight first came into international focus with a Russian airstrike on a maternity hospital on March 9, 2022, less than two weeks after the invasion of Ukraine began. A week later, about 300 people were reported killed in the bombing of a theater being used as the city's largest bomb shelter. Evidence obtained by The Associated Press suggested the real death toll could be closer to 600.

A small group of Ukrainian fighters held out for 83 days in the sprawling Azovstal steel works in eastern Mariupol before surrendering, their dogged defense tying down Russian forces and coming to symbolize Ukrainian tenacity in the face of Moscow's aggression.

Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine in 2014, a move that most of the world denounced as illegal, and moved in September to officially claim four regions in Ukraine's south and east as Russian territory, following referendums that Kyiv and the West described as a sham.

The ICC on Friday accused Putin of bearing personal responsibility for the abductions of children from Ukraine. U.N. investigators also said there was evidence for the forced transfer of "hundreds" of Ukrainian children to Russia. According to Ukrainian government figures, over 16,000 children have been deported to Russian-controlled territories or Russia itself, many of them from Mariupol.

While the ICC's move was welcomed by Kyiv, the chances of Putin facing trial are slim because Moscow does not recognize the court's jurisdiction or extradite its nationals.

Ukrainian officials reported Sunday that at least three civilians had been killed and 19 wounded by Russian shelling in the previous 24 hours. The deaths were in the eastern Donetsk region, amid fierce battles for control of the city of Bakhmut, according to Gov. Pavlo Kyrylenko on Ukrainian TV.

Kharkiv regional Gov. Oleh Syniehubov said in a Telegram update that a 51-year-old woman was "fighting for her life" after being hit by shrapnel as Russian troops fired on the border town of Dvorichna.

Top Ukrainian presidential aide Andriy Yermak said Ukrainian troops were holding the line near Bakhmut, a key target of a long, grinding Russian offensive, adding that the enemy's plan to occupy the city "are now foundering."

The spokesman for Ukraine's eastern forces said Russian troops are "tactically unable to complete" Bakhmut's capture.

"Yes, there are very active battles, (the Russians) continue to carry out several dozen attacks by inertia, but they suffer huge losses," Serhii Cherevaty said on Ukrainian TV, adding that Ukrainian defenses are "bleeding the enemy, breaking his fighting spirit."

Taking Bakhmut would give the Kremlin a battlefield victory after months of setbacks, and could pave the way for Russia to threaten other Ukrainian strongholds in the region, including Sloviansk and Kramatorsk.

Russian forces shelled a house in Bilozerka, a suburb west of the southern city of Kherson, and a woman who was pulled from the rubble was hospitalized, according to the Kherson regional military administration, writing on Telegram.

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Macron's leadership at risk amid tensions over pension plan

By SYLVIE CORBET The Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — A parody photo appearing on protest signs and online in France shows President Emmanuel Macron sitting on piles of garbage. It's both a reference to the trash going uncollected with Paris sanitation workers on strike — and to what many French people think about their leader.

Macron had hoped his push to raise the retirement age from 62 to 64 would cement his legacy as the president who transformed France's economy for the 21st century. Instead, he finds his leadership contested, both in parliament and on the streets of major cities.

His brazen move to force a pension reform bill through without a vote has infuriated the political opposition and could hamper his government's ability to pass legislation for the remaining four years of his term.

Demonstrators hoisted the parody photo at protests after Macron chose at the last minute Thursday to invoke the government's constitutional power to pass the bill without a vote at the National Assembly.

In his first public comment on the issue since then, the 45-year-old leader expressed his wish for the bill to "reach the end of its democratic path in an atmosphere of respect for everyone," according to a statement Sunday from his office provided to The Associated Press.

Since becoming president in 2017, Macron often has been accused of arrogance and being out of touch. Perceived as "the president of the rich," he stirred resentment for telling a jobless man he only needed to "cross the street" to find work and by suggesting some French workers were "lazy."

Now, Macron's government has alienated citizens "for a long time" to come by using the special authority it has under Article 49.3 of the French Constitution to impose a widely unpopular change, said Brice Teinturier, deputy director general of the Ipsos poll institute.

He said the situation's only winners are far-right leader Marine Le Pen and her National Rally party, "which continues its strategy of both 'getting respectable' and opposing Macron," and France's labor unions. Le Pen was runner-up to Macron in the country's last two presidential elections.

As the garbage piles get bigger and the smell from them worse, many people in Paris blame Macron, not the striking workers.

Macron repeatedly said he was convinced the French retirement system needed modifying to keep it financed. He says other proposed options, like increasing the already heavy tax burden, would push investors away, and that decreasing the pensions of current retirees was not a realistic alternative.

The public displays of displeasure may weigh heavily on his future decisions. The spontaneous, sometimes violent protests that erupted in Paris and across the country in recent days have contrasted with the largely peaceful demonstrations and strikes previously organized by France's major unions.

Macron's reelection to a second term last April bolstered his standing as a senior player in Europe. He campaigned on a pro-business agenda, pledging to address the pension issue and saying the French must "work longer."

In June, Macron's centrist alliance lost its majority in the lower house of parliament, though it still holds more seats than other political parties. He said at the time that his government wanted to "legislate in a different way," based on compromises with a range of political groups.

Since then, conservative lawmakers have agreed to support some bills that fit with their own policies. But tensions over the pension plan, and widespread lack of trust among ideologically diverse parties, may end attempts at seeking compromise.

Macron's political opponents in the National Assembly filed two no-confidence motions Friday against the government of Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne. Government officials are hoping to survive a vote on the motions set for Monday because the opposition is divided, with many Republicans expected not to support it.

If a motion passes, however, it would be a big blow for Macron: the pension bill would be rejected and his Cabinet would have to resign. In that case, the president would need to appoint a new Cabinet and find his ability to get legislation passed weakened.

Macron notably hopes to propose new measures designed to bring France's unemployment rate down to 5%, from 7.2% now, by the end of his second and final term.

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If the no-confidence motions fail, Macron could enact the higher retirement age but try to appease his critics with a government reshuffle.

Either way, Macron would keep his job until his term runs out in 2027, and retain substantial powers over foreign policy, European affairs and defense. As commander-in-chief of the armed forces, he can make decisions about France's support for Ukraine and other global issues without parliamentary approval.

France's strong presidential powers are a legacy from Gen. Charles de Gaulle's desire to have a stable political system for the Fifth Republic he established in 1958.

Another option in the hands of the president is to dissolve the National Assembly and call for an early parliamentary election.

That scenario appears unlikely for now, since the unpopularity of the pension plan means Macron's alliance would be unlikely to secure a majority of seats. And if another party won, he would have to appoint a prime minister from the majority faction, empowering the government to implement policies that diverge from the president's priorities.

Le Pen said she would welcome a dissolution.

And Mathilde Panot, a lawmaker from the leftist Nupes coalition, said with sarcasm Thursday that it was a "very good" idea for Macron to disband the Assembly and trigger an election.

"I believe it would be a good occasion for the country to reaffirm that yes, they want the retirement age down at 60," Panot said. "The Nupes is always available to govern."

Source: Lawyer invited to testify before Trump grand jury

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A lawyer who previously advised Michael Cohen, the key government witness in the hush money payment investigation into Donald Trump, has been invited to appear Monday before a Manhattan grand jury that is considering potential charges against the former president, according to a person familiar with the matter.

Robert Costello had advised Cohen before the two had a falling out, and is prepared to offer testimony to the grand jury attacking the credibility of Cohen's statements, according to the person, who insisted on anonymity to discuss secret legal proceedings.

Costello had contacted a lawyer for Trump saying that he had information that contradicted Cohen's current statements and that could be exculpatory for Trump, the person said. The lawyer brought it to the attention of the district attorney's office, which last week subpoenaed Costello's law firm for records and invited him to provide testimony on Monday afternoon.

The Manhattan district attorney's office declined to comment on Sunday. Prosecutors have not said when they expect to conclude their work or when or if Trump might be charged. The former president claimed in a post on Saturday that he would be arrested on Tuesday, though people close to him later said that he had been given no updates from prosecutors.

The New York Times first reported on Costello's expected appearance before the grand jury.

Cohen is a former lawyer and fixer for Trump who has been a key witness in District Attorney Alvin Bragg's investigation, meeting regularly with prosecutors and appearing before the grand jury earlier this month.

Cohen served prison time after pleading guilty in 2018 to federal charges, including campaign finance violations, for arranging the payouts to porn actor Stormy Daniels and model Karen McDougal to keep them from going public. Trump has denied the affairs.

Costello is a veteran New York lawyer who has represented Trump allies including his adviser Steve Bannon and his personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani. Costello's connection to Cohen was highlighted in the report of special counsel Robert Mueller, who investigated links between Russia and Trump's 2016 presidential campaign as well as efforts to obstruct the probe.

According to the Mueller report, Cohen began speaking with Costello in April 2018, days after the FBI raided Cohen's home, hotel room and office. Amid public speculation about whether Cohen would begin cooperating with investigators, Costello emailed Cohen to reassure him that he had had a "Very Very Positive" conversation with Giuliani and that "you have friends in high places."

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Cohen has waived his attorney-client privilege with Costello, which would allow Costello to describe their conversations, the person said.

Xavier beats Pitt 84-73, reaches 1st Sweet 16 since 2017

By STEVE REED AP Sports Writer

GREENSBORO, N.C. (AP) — Sean Miller has unselfish Xavier back in the Sweet 16.

Jack Nunge scored 18 points, Adam Kunkel added 15 on five first-half 3-pointers, and No. 3 seed Xavier beat 11th-seeded Pittsburgh 84-73 on Sunday to advance to the NCAA Tournament's second week for the first time since 2017.

Colby Jones had 10 points, 14 rebounds and seven assists, and Souley Boum and Jerome Hunter each chipped in with 14 points as all five Xavier starters scored in double digits.

Xavier entered the game leading the country in assists per game (19.2) and had 17 on 19 baskets in the first half to build a 48-34 lead at the break. The Musketeers finished with 22 assists.

The victory came exactly one year after Miller agreed to return as Xavier's coach.

He had coached the Musketeers from 2004-09, helping them reach the Sweet 16 twice and the Elite Eight once before leaving for Arizona. This will be Miller's first regional semifinal appearance since 2018 with the Wildcats.

Miller said he never doubted he could still win, but gave the credit to his players.

"I have an amazing group to work with," Miller said. "There's a lot of coaches that could win with this team, and I recognize that. My hope is that we have more in us, that we're able to have a great week and make what we already feel good about even better."

Xavier (27-9) moves on to play No. 2 seed Texas on Friday in the Midwest Region semifinals in Kansas City, Missouri.

Blake Hinson scored 18 points and Jamarius Burton had 16 for Pitt (24-12).

It was the second straight game Nunge came up big for Xavier. The 7-foot center had a critical blocked shot in the closing seconds of the Musketeers' 72-67 first-round win over 14th-seeded Kennesaw State.

"I've been dreaming about this moment ever since I started watching basketball," Nunge said. "When you are in school, you are thrilled when your teachers let you turn on the game and not have to focus on class. And so March Madness is a special time of year. It's the best tournament in the world."

Nunge set the tone early, dominating the paint with eight points in the first 10 minutes while Jones knocked down two 3s as the Musketeers bolted to a 28-18 lead.

The Musketeers blew the game open with a 12-2 run behind Kunkel, who made two 3s and threw an alley-oop dunk to Nunge. Kunkel followed with his fifth 3 of the first half to give Xavier a 19-point lead with 1:26 left.

"We really rode the wave of Adam Kunkel," Miller said. "He was 5 for 5 from the 3-point line. We really shared the ball and played at our pace throughout the game. We talked a lot about that before the game."

Pitt did not get closer than eight points in the second half even after Nunge fouled out with 3:18 remaining.

After holding No. 6 seed Iowa State to 41 points on Friday, Pitt allowed Xavier to score 42 in the first 15 minutes.

"Iowa State was not as good of an offensive team as Xavier," Pitt coach Jeff Capel said. "Xavier has been an elite offensive team all year. They were moving with great pace. They made seven 3s in the first half. The ball had energy. ... We couldn't disrupt their rhythm."

FEDERIKO OUT

It didn't help Pitt's cause that big man Federiko Federiko played less than a minute because of a knee problem that also kept him out of the Panthers' First Four win over Mississippi State. Capel said he noticed Federiko running with a limp and immediately removed him so he wouldn't risk further injury. Federiko spent the rest of the game on a stationary bike, often grimacing in pain.

BIG PICTURE

Pitt: The Panthers won their first two NCAA Tournament games since 2014 before bowing out. "It sucks

right now," Pitt guard Nelly Cummings said. "It stings we just lost, but when you have a little bit of time to reflect, we accomplished a lot of things, so I think the bond that we have is definitely a reason for that."

Xavier: After needing to come back from 13 down in the second half to beat Kennesaw State, the Musketeers left no doubt about this one, coming out focused and ready to play.

UP NEXT

Xavier will face a Longhorns team that has won six straight games.

DA leading Trump case says rhetoric won't intimidate office

By MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg is standing firm against Donald Trump's increasingly hostile rhetoric, telling his staff that the office won't be intimidated or deterred as it nears a decision on charging the former president.

Bragg sent an internal memo late Saturday hours after Trump unleashed a three-part, all-caps social media post in which he said he could be arrested in the coming days, criticized the district attorney and encouraged his supporters to protest and "TAKE OUR NATION BACK!"

Bragg, whose office has been calling witnesses to a grand jury investigating hush money paid on Trump's behalf during his 2016 campaign, did not mention the Republican by name, but made it clear that's who he was writing about. The memo came as law enforcement officials in New York City are making security preparations for the possibility Trump is charged and appears in court in Manhattan.

"We do not tolerate attempts to intimidate our office or threaten the rule of law in New York," Bragg wrote, referring to "press attention and public comments" regarding an ongoing investigation by his office.

As Bragg sought to assuage concerns about potential threats, posts about protests began popping up online, including a rally on Monday against Bragg organized by the New York Young Republican Club.

Law enforcement officials in New York are also closely monitoring online chatter warning of protests and violence if Trump is arrested, four law enforcement officials told The Associated Press. The threats that law enforcement agents are tracking vary in specificity and credibility, the officials said. Mainly posted online and in chat groups, the messages have included calls for armed protesters to block law enforcement officers and attempt to stop any potential arrest, the officials said.

The law enforcement officials are also discussing a multitude of security plans for lower Manhattan in the event Trump is indicted. Those plans — which the officials described as preliminary — include the potential for closing down several streets around the Manhattan criminal courthouse and blocking streets with large trucks, similar to security protocols in place for major events and parades in New York.

The officials could not discuss details of the security plans publicly and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity.

Bragg, a Democrat, inherited the yearslong Trump investigation when he took office in January 2022 and quickly faced criticism — not from Trump, but from holdover prosecutors for backing away from his predecessor's plans to charge the former president with business-related fraud.

Bragg rebounded with convictions for Trump's company, the Trump Organization, and his longtime finance chief for an unrelated tax fraud scheme before pivoting to what he's called the probe's "next chapter" — bringing fresh scrutiny to the hush money payments, which have been the subject of repeated federal and state-level inquiries over the last six years.

Now, as that probe nears its denouement, Bragg is seeking to reassure his 1,600 employees in the face of increasing hostility from Trump and his supporters.

In his memo Saturday night, he wrote that the office is working with court officers and New York City police to ensure they are safe and that "any specific or credible threats against the office" are investigated.

The memo and Trump's earlier social media postings underscored the contrast in styles between Bragg and Trump — two native New Yorkers, but from different eras, neighborhoods and backgrounds, and with exceedingly disparate personas.

Bragg, an old-school lawyer who prefers to let the work speak for itself, has declined to comment pub-

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licly about the status of the hush-money investigation or Trump's bombastic missives. His office has also declined comment.

There has been no public announcement of a time frame for a decision on charging Trump and at least one additional witness is expected to testify, likely Monday, further indicating that no vote to indict has yet been taken.

In a post Sunday, Trump lambasted Bragg — Manhattan's first Black district attorney — as a "Racist in Reverse," and accused him, without evidence, of taking orders from the Justice Department and being a pawn for billionaire Democratic donor George Soros, who supported Bragg's campaign through the Color Of Change PAC.

Bragg, 49, came into office 15 months ago amid what he calls a "perfect storm" of rising crime and political pressure, along with internal strife he was facing over the direction of the Trump investigation.

A Harvard-educated former federal prosecutor, chief deputy state attorney general and civil rights lawyer, Bragg came equipped with legal and management credentials, but not much experience navigating New York City politics.

His courtroom bona fides include prosecuting a rogue FBI agent and overseeing lawsuits against Trump while a high-ranking official at the state attorney general's office. His life experience includes growing up in Harlem during the 1980s crack cocaine epidemic and being held at gunpoint six times — three times by police.

But shortly after taking office, Republicans and some centrist Democrats were labeling Bragg soft on crime for a "Day One" memo he sent to staff outlining his philosophy on prosecuting — or not prosecuting — certain offenses. Among other things, it said the DA would no longer prosecute some low-level misdemeanor crimes, including subway fare evasion and marijuana possession.

Former U.S. Rep. Lee Zeldin, a Republican, campaigned for governor last year partly on a promise to remove the independently elected Bragg from office. The vitriol against Bragg became so rancid — and sometimes racist — friends worried for his safety.

The New York Post put Bragg on its front page 13 times in his first year in office, including five times in his first month, with derisive headlines like "Happy 2022, Criminals!" and "'Justice' Gone Mad."

It became routine for a Post photographer to pepper Bragg with questions when he arrived at the D.A.'s office each morning, when he often ignored. The truth was: while some types of crime increased in Manhattan in 2022, compared to the previous year, there were fewer murders and shootings.

Inside the district attorney's office, Bragg faced dissent over the direction of the Trump investigation — grievances aired anew last month in a book by a former prosecutor, Mark Pomerantz.

In 2021, Bragg's predecessor, Cyrus R. Vance Jr., authorized Pomerantz and another top deputy, Carey Dunne, to seek an indictment on charges that Trump exaggerated the worth of his assets in financial statements he gave to lenders. Vance left office before the case was finished, leaving the decision about charges to Bragg.

Bragg decided not to proceed immediately, citing concerns about the strength of the case. In a recent statement, he said: "Pomerantz's plane wasn't ready for takeoff."

The delay prompted Pomerantz and Dunne to resign, leading to some speculation that Bragg had given up on pursuing a case against Trump.

Bragg refuted that in a rare public statement last April, writing: "In the long and proud tradition of white-collar prosecutions at the Manhattan D.A.'s Office, we are investigating thoroughly and following the facts without fear or favor."

Nations approve key UN science report on climate change

By FRANK JORDANS Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Governments gave their blessing on Sunday to a major new U.N. report on climate change, after approval was held up by a battle between rich and developing countries over emissions targets and financial aid to vulnerable nations.

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The report by hundreds of the world's top scientists was supposed to be approved by government delegations on Friday at the end of a weeklong meeting in the Swiss town of Interlaken.

The closing gavel was repeatedly pushed back as officials from big nations such as China, Brazil, Saudi Arabia, the United States and the European Union haggled through the weekend over the wording of key phrases in the text.

The report by the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change caps a series that digests vast amounts of research on global warming compiled since the Paris climate accord was agreed in 2015.

A summary of the report was approved early Sunday but agreement on the main text dragged on for several more hours, with some observers fearing it might need to be postponed.

The U.N. plans to publish the report at a news conference early Monday afternoon.

The unusual process of having countries sign off on a scientific report is intended to ensure that governments accept its findings as authoritative advice on which to base their actions.

At the start of the meeting, U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres called on delegates to provide "cold, hard facts" to drive home the message that there's little time left for the world to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit) compared with preindustrial times.

While average global temperatures have already increased by 1.1 Celsius since the 19th century, Guterres insisted that the 1.5-degree target limit remains possible "with rapid and deep emissions reductions across all sectors of the global economy."

Observers said the IPCC meetings have increasingly become politicized as the stakes for curbing global warming increase, mirroring the annual U.N. climate talks that usually take place at the end of the year.

Among the thorniest issues at the current meeting were how to define which nations count as vulnerable developing countries, making them eligible for cash from a "loss and damage" fund agreed on at the last U.N. climate talks in Egypt. Delegates have also battled over figures stating how much greenhouse gas emissions need to be cut by over the coming years, and how to include artificial or natural carbon removal efforts in the equations.

As the country that has released the biggest amount of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere since industrialization, the United States has pushed back strongly against the notion of historic responsibility for climate change.

Pakistani police file terrorism charges against ex-PM Khan

By ZARAR KHAN Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Police in the Pakistani capital filed charges Sunday against former Prime Minister Imran Khan, 17 of his aides and scores of supporters, accusing them of terrorism and several other offenses after the ousted premier's followers clashed with security forces in Islamabad the previous day.

For hours on Saturday, Khan's followers clashed with police outside a court where the former prime minister was to appear in a graft case. Riot police wielded batons and fired tear gas while Khan's supporters threw fire bombs and hurled rocks at the officers.

More than 50 officers were injured and a police checkpoint, several cars and motorcycles were torched. Police said 59 of Khan's supporters were arrested during the violence.

Khan never actually appeared inside the court to face charges that he had sold state gifts received while in office and concealed assets.

Besides Khan, the case filed Sunday also accuses former and current lawmakers, former ministers, a former National Assembly speaker and scores of Khan's supporters. The charges include terrorism, obstructing police officers in carrying out their tasks, attacks on police, wounding officers and threatening their lives.

The developments are the latest involving increasing violence surrounding the 70-year-old Khan, who was ousted in a no-confidence vote in Parliament last April. Since then, the former cricket star turned Islamist politician has claimed — without offering evidence — that his ouster was illegal and a conspiracy by the government of his successor, Shahbaz Sharif, and Washington. Both Sharif and the United States have denied the allegations.

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Also on Saturday, violence erupted again outside Khan's home in the eastern city of Lahore, where officers and Khan's supporters had clashed for two straight days in a standoff earlier last week, after police arrived in the upscale neighborhood to arrest Khan.

Amid tear gas and clashes, police stormed Khan's residence, and later said they arrested 61 suspects and seized petrol bombs, weapons and ammunition. Khan was not at home, having traveled to Islamabad for the court appearance. After he failed to appear in court, the judge postponed that hearing until March 30.

In a recorded video message broadcast Sunday, Khan blamed police for his failure to appear in court on Saturday, saying he never left his vehicle as the police were lobbing tear gas at his convoy and supporters.

Without offering anything to back his claim, Khan said his opponents are bent on either putting him in jail or killing him, and denounced the raid on his home in Lahore as "shameful tactics, conspiracies and plans."

Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah accused Khan of "creating all the drama just to avoid" the courts.

New law allows anti-abortion monument at Arkansas Capitol

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) — Arkansas Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders has signed a new law that will allow a monument near the state Capitol marking the number of abortions performed in Arkansas before the U.S. Supreme Court struck down Roe v. Wade.

Sanders' office said Friday night that the Republican governor signed the bill that will allow the creation of a privately funded "monument to the unborn" on the Capitol grounds. The bill, approved by lawmakers last week, requires the secretary of state to permit and arrange the placement of the monument.

It also requires the Capitol Arts and Grounds Commission to oversee the selection of the artist and the design of the monument, with input from anti-abortion groups.

A law Arkansas approved in 2019 banning nearly all abortions took effect last year when the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the 1973 Roe decision. Arkansas' ban only allows abortions to save the life of the mother in a medical emergency.

Tennessee lawmakers approved legislation in 2018 allowing a similar privately funded monument on its Capitol grounds. The monument has not yet been installed.

Arkansas' proposal faced opposition from some anti-abortion Republicans who said it was counterproductive, and Democrats who said the monument proposal was divisive.

Other monuments on the state Capitol grounds include a sculpture of the nine Black students who integrated Little Rock Central High School. A Ten Commandments monument was installed on the Capitol grounds in 2018.

Higher cancer rates found in military pilots, ground crews

By TARA COPP Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A Pentagon study has found high rates of cancer among military pilots and for the first time has shown that ground crews who fuel, maintain and launch those aircraft are also getting sick.

The data had long been sought by retired military aviators who have raised alarms for years about the number of air and ground crew members they knew who had cancer. They were told that earlier military studies had found they were not at greater risk than the general U.S. population.

In its yearlong study of almost 900,000 service members who flew on or worked on military aircraft between 1992 and 2017, the Pentagon found that air crew members had an 87% higher rate of melanoma and a 39% higher rate of thyroid cancer, while men had a 16% higher rate of prostate cancer and women a 16% higher rate of breast cancer. Overall, the air crews had a 24% higher rate of cancer of all types.

The study showed ground crews had a 19% higher rate of brain and nervous system cancers, a 15% higher rate of thyroid cancer and a 9% higher rate of kidney or renal cancers, while women had a 7% higher rate of breast cancer. The overall rate for cancers of all types was 3% higher.

There was some good news reported as well. Both ground and air crews had far lower rates of lung cancer, and air crews also had lower rates of bladder and colon cancers.

The data compared the service members with the general U.S. population after adjusting for age, sex

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and race.

The Pentagon said the new study was one of the largest and most comprehensive to date. An earlier study had looked at just Air Force pilots and had found some higher rates of cancer, while this one looked across all services and at both air and ground crews. Even with the wider approach, the Pentagon cautioned that the actual number of cancer cases was likely to be even higher because of gaps in the data, which it said it would work to remedy.

The study "proves that it's well past time for leaders and policy makers to move from skepticism to belief and active assistance," said retired Air Force Col. Vince Alcazar, a member of the Red River Valley Fighter Pilots Association, which had lobbied the Pentagon and Congress for help. Alcazar serves on the association's medical issues committee.

The study was required by Congress in the 2021 defense bill. Now, because higher rates were found, the Pentagon must conduct an even bigger review to try to understand why the crews are getting sick.

Isolating potential causes is difficult, and the Pentagon was careful to note that this study "does not imply that military service in air crew or ground crew occupations causes cancer, because there are multiple potential confounding factors that could not be controlled for in this analysis," such as family histories, smoking or alcohol use.

But aviation crews have long asked for the Pentagon to look closely at some of the environmental factors they are exposed to, such as jet fuels and solvents used to clean and maintain jet parts, sensors and their power sources in aircraft nose cones, and the massive radar systems on the decks of the ships they land on.

When Navy Capt. Jim Seaman would come home from a deployment aboard an aircraft carrier, his gear would reek of jet fuel, his widow Betty Seaman said. The A-6 Intruder pilot died in 2018 at age 61 of lung cancer. Betty Seaman still has his gear stored and it still smells of fuel, "which I love," she said.

She and others wonder if there's a link. She said crews would talk about how even the ship's water systems would smell of fuel.

She said she and others have mixed feelings about finally seeing in data what they have suspected for years about the aviation cancers. But "it has the potential to do a lot of good as far as early communication, early detection," she said.

The study found that when crew members were diagnosed with cancer, they were more likely to survive than members of the general population, which the study suggested was because they were diagnosed earlier due to regular required medical checkups and were more likely to be in better health because of their military fitness requirements.

The Pentagon acknowledged that the study had gaps that likely led to an undercount of cancer cases.

The military health system database used in the study did not have reliable cancer data until 1990, so it may not have included pilots who flew early-generation jets in the prior decades.

The study also did not include cancer data from the Department of Veterans Affairs or state cancer registries, which means it did not capture cases from former crew members who got sick after leaving the military medical system.

"It is important to note that study results may have differed had additional older former service members been included," it said.

To remedy that, the Pentagon is now going to pull data from those registries to add to the total count, the study said.

The second phase of the study will try to isolate causes. The 2021 bill requires the Defense Department not only to identify "the carcinogenic toxicants or hazardous materials associated with military flight operations," but also determine the type of aircraft and locations where diagnosed crews served.

After her husband got sick, Betty Seaman asked him if he would have chosen differently, knowing his service might be linked to his cancer.

"I flat-out asked Jim. And he, without hesitation, said, 'I would have still done it.'"

GOP donor faces trial on charges of sex trafficking minors

By STEVE KARNOWSKI Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — A formerly well-connected Republican donor, accused of plying petite, vulnerable teenage girls with cash, liquor and gifts, goes on trial Tuesday on federal charges of sex trafficking minors.

Anton "Tony" Lazzaro is charged with seven counts involving "commercial sex acts" with five minors ages 15 and 16 in 2020, when he was 30 years old. His indictment touched off a political firestorm that led to the downfall of Jennifer Carnahan as chair of the Republican Party of Minnesota.

His co-defendant, Gisela Castro Medina, who formerly led the College Republicans chapter at the University of St. Thomas, pleaded guilty to two counts last year. She is cooperating with prosecutors and will testify against him. She faces sentencing in August.

Lazzaro denies the sex-trafficking allegations. He says the government targeted him for political reasons and because of his wealth.

Prosecutors say it's simply a sex-trafficking case. They have not signaled any intent to call political figures as witnesses, nor has the defense. U.S. District Judge Patrick Schiltz has already rejected Lazzaro's claims of selective prosecution.

But Lazzaro insists he's innocent and that the charges are politically motivated.

"Mr. Lazzaro believes he is being targeted by the U.S. Department of Justice for his political activities," spokeswoman Stacy Bettison said in a statement to The Associated Press. "The unusual application of the federal sex trafficking statute to the facts in Mr. Lazzaro's case supports his beliefs. He is not alone in his view that the U.S. Department of Justice is politicizing prosecutions. Many other individuals, including many members of Congress and most recently the Senate Judiciary Committee, have recently raised legitimate and credible concerns that Attorney General (Merrick) Garland is politicizing the department by aggressively investigating Republicans and conservative activists, like Mr. Lazzaro."

Carnahan is the widow of U.S. Rep. Jim Hagedorn, who died of kidney cancer in February 2022. She denied knowing of any wrongdoing by Lazzaro before the charges were unsealed in August 2021, and she condemned his alleged crimes. But his arrest fueled outrage among party activists. Allegations surfaced that she created a toxic work environment and abused nondisclosure agreements to silence her critics. She resigned a week later.

Carnahan and Lazzaro became friends when she ran unsuccessfully for a legislative seat in 2016. He backed her bid to become party chair in 2017 and attended her 2018 wedding to Hagedorn. They hosted a podcast together for a few months.

Lazzaro also helped run the campaign of Republican Lacy Johnson, who failed to unseat Democratic U.S. Rep. Ilhan Omar, of Minnesota, in 2020. Pictures on Lazzaro's social media accounts showed him with prominent Republicans, including former President Donald Trump and former Vice President Mike Pence. He founded a political action committee called Big Tent Republicans, which advocated for a more inclusive party.

Lazzaro gave more than \$270,000 to Republican campaigns and political committees over the years, including \$42,000 to the state party organization and \$31,000 to Hagedorn's campaign. Several recipients quickly donated those contributions to charity after the charges became public, including U.S. Rep. Tom Emmer, of Minnesota, who received \$15,600 but suffered no repercussions. Emmer became majority whip in January.

Prosecutors alleged in their trial brief earlier this month that Lazzaro conspired with Castro Medina and others to recruit 15- and 16-year-old girls to have sex with him in exchange for cash and valuable items. They met in May 2020 on a "sugar daddy" website when she was 18 years old and finishing high school, prosecutors wrote.

According to the brief, Lazzaro had "a stated sexual preference for young, tiny girls" and liked them "broken" and vulnerable — but without tattoos. Prosecutors say he paid Castro Medina "well over \$50,000," including money for her tuition, her off-campus apartment and her Mini Cooper.

He often sent cars to take the girls to his luxury penthouse condo at the Hotel Ivy in downtown Min-

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neapolis, prosecutors said.

"Once the girls Castro Medina recruited arrived at Lazzaro's apartment, a similar pattern ensued," the brief alleges. "Lazzaro would brag about his wealth and connections. He would give the girls — small and young — hard liquor. Lazzaro would take out stacks of cash and offer the girls precise sums of money to perform certain sex acts with him, and with each other. \$100 to kiss. \$400 for sex. And so forth. He would send them home with cash, vapes, alcohol, Plan B, cell phones, and other items of value." Plan B is a form of emergency birth control.

Lazzaro is also the target of a lawsuit by one alleged victim who claims he offered \$1,000 in hush money to her and her parents and asked them to sign a nondisclosure agreement.

The charges against Lazzaro, who has been jailed since his arrest and has been denied bail, carry mandatory minimum sentences of 10 years with a maximum potential of life in prison.

The sources of Lazzaro's wealth are murky. Defense filings have called him "an up-and-coming real estate owner and entrepreneur." Items seized from him included a 2010 Ferrari and more than \$371,000 in cash. The government put his net worth in a bond report at more than \$2 million but said its calculations didn't include his "extensive" but hard-to-trace cryptocurrency holdings. It noted that the search yielded multiple types of foreign currency, plus precious metals worth more than \$500,000.

Republican bills push cash bail, subvert Democratic changes

By HARM VENHUIZEN Associated Press/Report for America

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — Just two days before he drove his SUV through a Christmas parade in suburban Milwaukee, killing six people and injuring more than 60, Darrell Brooks Jr. had posted bail for charges of domestic violence.

He had been accused of using his SUV to run over the mother of his child, and a pretrial assessment found Brooks was at high risk of reoffending. But a court official set that bail at a mere \$1,000 cash at the request of prosecutors, who later called their recommendation a mistake. For the parade killings, Brooks was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Brooks quickly became the poster child for a Republican-backed push to enact tougher bail policies. The Republican-controlled Wisconsin Legislature is asking voters to ratify a constitutional amendment that would make it harder for violent criminals to get out of jail on bail.

GOP lawmakers in other states also are scrambling to make it harder for defendants to get out of jail before trial after branding themselves as tough on crime in the 2022 midterm elections. Their efforts have led to a fierce fight with Democrats over public safety and the rights of criminal defendants.

Recent Democratic overhaul measures in states such as Illinois and New York have sought to eliminate cash bail and lessen pretrial detention on the premise they do more harm than good, especially to marginalized groups.

But Republican lawmakers in at least 14 states have introduced some 20 bills so far this year to do just the opposite. Their proposals include increasing the number of non-bailable offenses, requiring more people to pay cash bail and encouraging or requiring judges to consider a defendant's criminal record when setting bail.

Criminal justice experts and advocacy groups warn the Republican-backed measures aren't supported by research and could worsen crime rates and disparities between rich and poor. Bail is meant to ensure a defendant returns to court and isn't supposed to be a punishment, since the defendant hasn't yet been convicted.

"Cash bail is not a benefit to defendants or to public safety," said Shima Baradaran Baughman, a law professor at the University of Utah who studies bail.

"When people are detained before trial even for a few days, they are dramatically more likely to reoffend later," Baughman said. "In other words, it is much safer to the public to release most people before trial than to detain them."

Defendants jailed before trial are much more likely to plead guilty to charges — often accepting deals that sentence them to time already served that end their detainment, researchers from Harvard, Stan-

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ford and Princeton found in a 2018 study. The same study found higher unemployment rates for pretrial detainees after they're released. It's not uncommon for defendants who can't make bail to lose their jobs and even their homes while in jail awaiting trial.

While Republicans seeking to widen the use of bail acknowledge people are legally presumed innocent before trial, some say they believe most defendants are ultimately guilty and that society would be safer if more are locked up.

Georgia Sen. Randy Robertson, a longtime sheriff's deputy and former state president of the Fraternal Order of Police, said he is "extremely confident" that most arrestees are guilty.

In February, the GOP-led Georgia state Senate passed a Robertson proposal that would add 53 offenses to a current list of just seven charges that always require cash or property bail. The new offenses include passing a bad check, which can be a misdemeanor or a felony, and such misdemeanors as reckless driving or fighting in public. Robertson argues that victims feel the justice system doesn't care about them when suspects are released without cash bail.

The measure requires three-time felons to post cash or property bail, as well as those with felony convictions in the past seven years. It also says any defendant can't be released without posting bail unless they appear before a judge.

The measures in Georgia, Wisconsin and elsewhere worry Insha Rahman, vice president of advocacy and partnerships at the Vera Institute for Justice. "When you are setting money bail on all kinds of offenses and judges can't release people, you are absolutely treading on presumption of innocence," she said.

Rahman, a former public defender who helped design bail laws in New York and other states, said the best research supports ending cash bail and offering personalized release conditions for most defendants. People who pose a "clear and immediate" threat to public safety are the exception, she said, and should be detained until trial.

"All money bail does is privilege the amount of money someone has in their pocket, not public safety," Rahman said.

Wisconsin Republican Sen. Van Wanggard, a former police officer who sponsored the constitutional amendment that gained traction after the Waukesha parade killings, said he doesn't believe imposing cash bail on more people or requiring higher bail violates the presumption of innocence.

"If someone is a repetitive criminal, I surely would rather have that individual locked up than out committing another crime," Wanggard said.

If ratified by Wisconsin voters on April 4, the amendment would let judges setting bail consider the criminal history of someone accused of a violent crime. Wisconsin judges currently can only set bail as a means to ensure someone returns to court. The measure also would require judges to publicly lay out their reasoning for the bail amounts they set.

Opponents criticize as overbroad the expanded list of crimes under the amendment, including watching a dog fight, violating a court order against contacting criminal gang members and negligently leaving a firearm where a child gains access to it.

Ohio voters passed a similar amendment in November, requiring judges to consider a suspect's threat to public safety when setting bail. Bills in Indiana and Missouri would likewise give judges more latitude to consider public safety and criminal histories.

In New York, bail has been a polarizing issue since majority Democrats passed a 2019 law abolishing pretrial incarceration for most nonviolent offenses. Many prosecutors, police officials, Republicans and even some moderate Democrats argued the changes threatened public safety.

Republican candidates running against crime saw big gains in New York City's suburbs in 2022. And Democratic Gov. Kathy Hochul, under pressure from voters, has said she wants to revisit bail laws this year to give judges more leeway when setting bail.

Democratic bail changes in Illinois ran into roadblocks when the state Supreme Court halted a new law that would have eliminated cash bail beginning Jan. 1. Prosecutors and sheriffs from 64 counties had sued, challenging the measure. The Supreme Court heard arguments on the lawsuit last week.

Baughman, the Utah law professor, said the Illinois law would likely both release more people before

trial and improve public safety.

"We are the only country in the world that forces defendants to pay money to obtain a constitutional right of release before trial," she said. "Poor defendants and people of color are most harmed when cash bail becomes the norm in a jurisdiction."

How to shop for new insurance if you lose Medicaid coverage

By TOM MURPHY AP Health Writer

Medicaid coverage will end for millions of Americans in the coming months, and it will push many into unfamiliar territory: the health insurance marketplace.

States will start cutting people from the government-funded plans when they no longer qualify based on income, a process that has been paused since shortly after the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

The timing of these cuts will vary. But all states have insurance markets where people who lose Medicaid can buy new coverage with help from subsidies. Some states will even connect shoppers with a potential new plan.

Shopping for affordable insurance that covers regular doctors and prescriptions can be daunting, especially in marketplaces that offer dozens of choices and subsidies to help pay for them. Experts say it helps to start this search with a plan. Here's a deeper look at the process.

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO MEDICAID?

Nearly 85 million people are covered by government-funded Medicaid, which focuses on people with low incomes.

At the start of the pandemic, the federal government prohibited states from kicking people off Medicaid if they were no longer eligible. That ban ends this spring, and many people on Medicaid will be introduced to this so-called redetermination process for the first time.

States are already verifying eligibility. Some, like Arizona, Arkansas and Idaho are expected to start ending coverage for ineligible people in April. Most states will be doing that in May, June and July.

Federal officials estimate that more than 8 million people will lose eligibility and leave Medicaid mainly because their incomes have changed.

WHERE TO GET NEW COVERAGE

State-based health insurance marketplaces created by the Affordable Care Act are the only places where people can buy individual insurance with help from an income-based subsidy. They can be found through the federal government's [healthcare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov) website.

Shoppers also can find coverage sold outside these marketplaces, but it may be risky. For instance, short-term plans can exclude coverage of certain things like a medical condition someone had before signing up.

INCOME-BASED SUBSIDIES

The cost of any new plan should be one of the first things people consider. Shoppers can get income-based subsidies to help pay monthly premiums of plans they buy on the state-based marketplaces. Those subsidies were enhanced during the pandemic.

People often don't realize they can get this help, said Jeremy Smith, director of West Virginia's health insurance navigator program, which helps shoppers find coverage.

"A very large percentage of people can qualify for a plan starting at \$0 per month," he said.

COVERAGE DIFFERENCES

Individual insurance differs from Medicaid in several ways. Some marketplace plans come with a big deductible that people must pay before most coverage starts.

Shoppers should understand deductibles and other payments they will need to make before committing to a plan, Smith noted.

Individual insurance also groups hospitals and doctors in networks. The insurance may cover much less of the bill for care received outside those networks. Shoppers should learn how any regular doctors and medications are covered before enrolling in a new plan.

Individual insurance also can give people more care choices. Many doctors don't accept Medicaid, and states may pay for only a limited amount of prescriptions.

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"It is possible that people will have better access to certain services in the marketplace," said Jennifer Tolbert, a Medicaid expert at the non-profit Kaiser Family Foundation.

IMPORTANT STEPS IF YOU'RE ON MEDICAID

Make sure your state program has your current contact information, including a mailing address plus email and cellphone. They will send notifications if they need more information or if someone no longer qualifies for Medicaid.

"Everyone should do that before April," said said Joshua Brooker, an independent broker based in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. "It's going to make a smoother transition."

Start shopping for new insurance before Medicaid ends. Shoppers should allow plenty of time to sort through options.

The goal should be to have new insurance that starts the day after Medicaid ends. That would cut down on temporary coverage losses for regular doctors or important medicines.

Once shoppers register to shop in the insurance marketplace, they have 60 days to find a plan.

GETTING HELP

Seeking assistance may be a good idea, especially for people who need help figuring out their income for the coming year. That's needed to calculate subsidies.

There are several ways people can get help.

States will transfer the names and contact information of those who no longer qualify for Medicaid to their marketplaces. They also will send a letter to Medicaid beneficiaries telling them how to connect to the marketplace, said Kate McEvoy, executive director of the nonprofit National Association of Medicaid Directors.

Some states will go further. California's marketplace, Covered California, will enroll people in a qualified health plan and send them the information. Those people then must confirm enrollment and pay the first premium to remain covered.

State marketplaces have navigators like Smith who can help people sort through options and understand potential plans. The government-funded navigators are free to use but they cannot recommend any specific choices.

Federally qualified health centers also have counselors who can help people apply.

Independent brokers also help people sort through options. They will get a fee that usually comes out of the premium you wind up paying.

In Chicago mayor's race, 2 hopefuls reflect Democrats' split

By SARA BURNETT Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Before they were rivals to be Chicago's next mayor, Paul Vallas and Brandon Johnson both worked in education, though their career paths — like their views on the city's future — were very different.

Vallas was CEO of Chicago Public Schools, appointed by then-Mayor Richard M. Daley after Illinois lawmakers in the 1990s gave control of the troubled district to City Hall. Vallas came to be known as a turnaround expert in Chicago and in other U.S. school districts, supporting charter schools and voucher programs.

Johnson taught middle and high schoolers before becoming an organizer for the Chicago Teachers Union, mobilizing thousands during a historic 2012 strike and in actions since that focused on strengthening public schools and the communities around them.

It is just one example, but a significant one, of the contrasts between the two men now vying to lead the heavily Democratic city.

Johnson is a progressive county commissioner who last month advanced to an April 4 runoff thanks to heavy support from the teachers union and who is now endorsed by progressive U.S. Sens. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass. Vallas, who finished first out of nine candidates in the February vote, is a more moderate Democrat who was endorsed by the Chicago police union and has focused strongly on reducing crime. Among his supporters are prominent members of the business community.

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Both men defeated Mayor Lori Lightfoot, who tried positioning herself between the two as a middle-of-the-road Democrat. She was the first incumbent to lose reelection in roughly 40 years.

The April contest reflects a broader tension for Democrats nationwide, pitting the candidates and the people and groups supporting them against each other in an increasingly bitter five-week campaign that already has cost millions of dollars. So far, some of the party's leaders — from President Joe Biden to Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker and the state's two U.S. senators — are opting not to endorse either candidate, possibly seeing political risk in picking a side.

For voters in Chicago, the two candidates offer clear distinctions on issues from education to crime and taxes, as well as very different biographies that have shaped their political lives.

Johnson, 46, is Black. The son of a minister, he grew up one of 10 kids in a family he says struggled to pay bills, sometimes having to run a power cord into their home from a neighbor's house to have electricity. An older brother died homeless and addicted.

Now a married father of three, Johnson lives in one of Chicago's most violent neighborhoods and says he has to drive his children to another part of the city to attend a school that offers orchestra.

He speaks of Chicago as a "tale of two cities," where some people — largely in minority neighborhoods that have seen decades of disinvestment — fight to get by, while others have great wealth and live in areas where with grocery stores, libraries and parks.

U.S. Rep. Jesus "Chuy" Garcia, who had strong support from Latino voters as he finished fourth in February, cited Johnson's ability to unite people of color as the congressman announced his former rival last week.

Vallas, 69, is white. He was the only non-Black or Hispanic candidate in the first round, when he was the top vote-getter with 33% to Johnson's 22%.

The grandson of Greek immigrants, Vallas worked in his family restaurant growing up and later was a state legislator and Chicago budget director. He stresses that he comes from a family of public servants, including veterans, teachers and police officers. Two of Vallas' sons were police officers, though one left the force to become a firefighter, he says. Vallas has run for office unsuccessfully several times, including for governor in 2002 and Chicago mayor in 2019, when he finished toward the bottom of the pack.

Vallas says he is running to be mayor "for all of Chicago," and that the fundamental first step is to make the country's third-largest city safer — including by hiring hundreds more police officers — and rebuilding trust between the police department and residents.

He has criticized Johnson as supporting a movement to "defund" the police, which activists across the United States called for after the murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police in 2020.

Johnson says he would not cut the number of police officers in the department. But as a county commissioner, he sponsored a symbolic resolution to redirect money from law enforcement to social services, such as mental health care. In a 2020 interview, Johnson said defunding was not just a slogan but an "actual political goal."

Asked about the comment during a debate this month, Johnson distanced himself, saying, "I said it was a political goal, I never said it was mine."

Johnson has attacked Vallas as a Republican in disguise, noting that Vallas has made comments about being more of a Republican than a Democrat and accepted the endorsement of the Fraternal Order of Police. The group recently hosted Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, considered a top GOP candidate for president in 2024, though Vallas issued a statement rebuking the Republican.

Vallas' support for abortion rights also has been called into question. Illinois is one of the few places in the central U.S. where abortion is legal, which has made the state, and Chicago, a destination for people seeking the procedure.

On a conservative talk show in 2009, Vallas said he is opposed to abortion, a comment his campaign says was taken out of context. During a recent debate he said it's "nonsense" that he opposes reproductive rights. Vallas explained he is Greek Orthodox, a religion that opposes abortion, but that he personally does not — a stance similar to top Democrats who are Catholic.

"I have the same position as Nancy Pelosi or Joe Biden," Vallas said.

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Education policy is another dividing line.

Chicago Public Schools canceled classes for five days in January 2022 after union members refused to return to in-person classes due to concerns about COVID-19 safety measures. Vallas said Johnson was partly responsible for that and other closures that shut down "one of the poorest school systems in the country, with devastating consequences," including an increase in crime.

Johnson has criticized Vallas' leadership of schools in Chicago and in subsequent jobs he held in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, in Philadelphia and Connecticut. Vallas' administration punished low-performing schools, including by firing staff in Chicago schools with poor test scores, and under his leadership, many New Orleans schools became independently run charter schools.

Vallas questioned how Johnson would be able to lead the city independently from the Chicago Teachers Union, which has bankrolled much of his campaign. Johnson said that if he is elected mayor, he will no longer be a member of the union, but he will work collaboratively with them.

Vallas' endorsement by the Fraternal Order of Police has drawn criticism from Johnson, who notes the union's leader voiced support for the Jan. 6 insurrectionists. Vallas says he has not taken any money from the union and will not be beholden to the group if elected.

Today in History: March 20, Menendez brothers convicted

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, March 20, the 79th day of 2023. There are 286 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On March 20, 1996, a jury in Los Angeles convicted Erik and Lyle Menendez of first-degree murder in the shotgun slayings of their wealthy parents. (They were sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.)

On this date:

In 1413, England's King Henry IV died; he was succeeded by Henry V.

In 1815, Napoleon Bonaparte returned to Paris after escaping his exile on Elba, beginning his "Hundred Days" rule.

In 1852, Harriet Beecher Stowe's influential novel about slavery, "Uncle Tom's Cabin," was first published in book form after being serialized.

In 1854, the Republican Party of the United States was founded by slavery opponents at a schoolhouse in Ripon, Wisconsin.

In 1922, the decommissioned USS Jupiter, converted into the first U.S. Navy aircraft carrier, was recommissioned as the USS Langley.

In 1952, the U.S. Senate ratified, 66-10, a Security Treaty with Japan.

In 1969, John Lennon married Yoko Ono in Gibraltar.

In 1976, kidnapped newspaper heiress Patricia Hearst was convicted of armed robbery for her part in a San Francisco bank holdup carried out by the Symbionese Liberation Army. (Hearst was sentenced to seven years in prison; she was released after serving 22 months, and was pardoned in 2001 by President Bill Clinton.)

In 1995, in Tokyo, 12 people were killed, more than 5,500 others sickened when packages containing the deadly chemical sarin were leaked on five separate subway trains by Aum Shinrikyo (ohm shin-ree-kyoh) cult members.

In 2014, President Barack Obama ordered economic sanctions against nearly two dozen members of Russian President Vladimir Putin's inner circle and a major bank that provided them support, raising the stakes in an East-West showdown over Ukraine.

In 2020, the governor of Illinois ordered residents to remain in their homes except for essential needs, joining similar efforts in California and New York to limit the spread of the coronavirus. Stocks tumbled again on Wall Street, ending their worst week since the 2008 financial crisis; the Dow fell more than 900

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points to end the week with a 17% loss.

Ten years ago: Making his first visit to Israel since taking office, President Barack Obama affirmed Israel's sovereign right to defend itself from any threat and vowed to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons. Five former elected officials of Bell, California, were convicted of misappropriating public funds by paying themselves huge salaries while raising taxes on residents; one defendant was acquitted. Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper signed bills that put sweeping new restrictions on sales of firearms and ammunition.

Five years ago: Investigators pursuing a suspected serial bombing in Austin, Texas, shifted attention to a FedEx shipping center near San Antonio, where a package had exploded. In a phone call to Vladimir Putin, President Donald Trump offered congratulations on Putin's re-election victory; a senior official said Trump had been warned in briefing materials that he should not congratulate Putin.

One year ago: Ukrainian authorities said Russia's military bombed an art school sheltering about 400 people in the port city of Mariupol, where refugees described how "battles took place over every street," weeks into a devastating siege. Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called on Israel to take a stronger stand against Russia, delivering an emotional appeal that compared Russia's invasion of his country to the actions of Nazi Germany. Yemen's Houthi rebels unleashed an intense barrage of drone and missile strikes on Saudi Arabia's critical energy facilities, sparking a fire at one site and temporarily cutting oil production at another. The salvo marked a serious escalation of rebel attacks on the kingdom as the war in Yemen raged into its eighth year.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Hal Linden is 92. Former Canadian prime minister Brian Mulroney is 84. Basketball Hall of Fame coach Pat Riley is 78. Country singer-musician Ranger Doug (Riders in the Sky) is 77. Hockey Hall of Famer Bobby Orr is 75. Blues singer-musician Marcia Ball is 74. Rock musician Carl Palmer (Emerson, Lake and Palmer) is 73. Rock musician Jimmie Vaughan is 72. Actor Amy Aquino is 66. Movie director Spike Lee is 66. Actor Theresa Russell is 66. Actor Vanessa Bell Calloway is 66. Actor Holly Hunter is 65. Rock musician Slim Jim Phantom (The Stray Cats) is 62. Actor-model-designer Kathy Ireland is 60. Actor David Thewlis is 60. Rock musician Adrian Oxaal (James) is 58. Actor Jessica Lundy is 57. Actor Liza Snyder is 55. Actor Michael Rapaport is 53. Actor Alexander Chaplin is 52. Actor Cedric Yarbrough is 50. Actor Paula Garcés is 49. Actor Bianca Lawson is 44. Comedian-actor Mikey Day is 43. Actor Nick Blood (TV: "Marvel's Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.") is 41. Rock musician Nick Wheeler (The All-American Rejects) is 41. Actor Michael Cassidy is 40. Actor-singer Christy Carlson Romano is 39. Actor Ruby Rose is 37. Actor Barrett Doss is 34.